

ONLY A PRIEST:
A BIOGRAPHY OF MONSIGNOR JOHN
ALEXANDER SHOCKLEE

By Harry E. Berndt

**DEDICATED TO PRIESTS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS
WHO SPEND THEIR LIVES SEEKING TRUTH, JUSTICE,
AND GODLINESS.**

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MONSIGNOR JOHN A. SHOCKLEE

As an unyielding advocate for the disenfranchised, you call us out of indifference into action. Your work in the areas of civil rights, poverty, housing, labor and interfaith relations exposes structural injustice and results in cooperative efforts to alleviate oppression, foster equality, promote racial harmony and create social justice.

To continue this legacy of social action and to nurture the discussion of social justice issues, we establish in your honor the

Annual Monsignor John A. Shocklee Social Justice Lecture.

St. Louis Archdiocesan Commission on Human Rights

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PROLOGUE

This book is not just about the life of one priest, but is a reflection on the lives of priests and religious, including women religious, throughout the world. It is not inclusive of only Catholic Religious, but those of all denominations, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish. All who dedicate their lives to those of us who live in material or spiritual poverty. Cardinal Joseph E. Ritter, at Vatican II, proposed that the term Church be extended to include all denominations. He also requested that a group of Protestant ministers give him their blessing, after he had blessed them. Monsignor John Shocklee, when asked how he felt about being transferred from his beloved poor inner-city parish to a rich suburban parish replied, "the spiritual poor are also in need". When asked about working with those kinds of people, he said, "all people are my kind of people". People are the Church, and those who best reflect the Church are the priests who are among us all; not the bishops, cardinals, or even the popes. Father John Shocklee was a priest.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justness, for they shall have their fill.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are they that have suffered persecution for justness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and speak all evil against you, lying because of me; rejoice and exult, because your reward is great in the heavens. For thus did they persecute the prophets who were before you.

(From the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:3-11)

. For I was hungry and you gave me to eat, thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you brought me within, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me, in prison and you came unto me..

Amen I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren you did it to me. (St. Matthew 25. abridged)

Monsignor John Alexander Shocklee was Only a Priest! That was enough.



INTRODUCTION

John Shocklee was born on July 3, 1917 and died at the age of 85 on February 6, 2003. He is remembered by many as the people's priest, by others as the labor priest, and still by others as the civil rights priest. Indeed, he was all of those things, and much more, but he thought of himself as only a priest. For him, there was nothing greater than to be a priest.

I was led to write about John Shocklee because he represented what I thought a priest should be, and what I knew most priests of whatever denomination strove to be. I was also concerned about the unfair and misleading image of priests, particularly Catholic priests. The sexually abusive acts against children and others by a relatively small percent of clergy cannot be excused or ignored, denied when proven, or covered up. But when media fail to acknowledge anything other than those acts, and leave the impression that, generally or even often, clergy are child molesters, a great disservice is done to the millions of dedicated clergy. Even though this is not done purposely, but thoughtlessly, the damage done is egregious.

John Shocklee's life as a priest remains an inspiration for the many priests who knew him, worked with him, and attempted to emulate his work, and a model for young men and women entering the religious life.

It seems that almost everyone has a story to tell about Monsignor Shocklee. Some of the stories are about how John provided advice or help of some kind, some are about something that had happened to John and how

he reacted, and some, actually many, are humorous. Sister Mary Jude Jun related a story that she had heard. One evening when John was walking back to the rectory several men accosted him. "Give me your money", one of them said. When John reached for his wallet, they noticed that he was a priest. "Father, don't you know that it is dangerous to be walking here at night. Get into your rectory."¹ That seems to be a creditable story, because John never feared walking at any time, anywhere. It was told more than once that he was the only person who could walk through the projects at any time and not be molested, because even the criminals inhabiting the vacant apartments and hallways held him in such high esteem.

People who volunteered to be part of the work that occurred at St. Bridget often felt that it was one of the most important things that happened in their lives. Sister Therese Stawowy certainly felt that way. "I first met John Shocklee at St. Bridget's when I taught a class at Webster College called Urban Sociology, in probably 1964. It seemed so real to me to take my students down to the inner city and talk about it right there. Father Shocklee was so great about talking to my students about the area called Pruitt-Igoe. We visited many families that lived in those apartments and we saw first hand the way they had to get to their apartments. They either had to take an elevator that was dirty and smelly, they stopped at odd numbered floors, and they might be robbed before they got to their apartment, or they could walk up the stairs that were just plain dangerous because of young thieves or young

men waiting to attack young women. Anyway, Father Shocklee spent a good deal of time taking us around the area and introducing us to parishioners, as well as merchants. Everyone seemed to know him and always had a kind word to say about him. He was a real person with a way of opening doors where no one else wanted to try, because of major challenges. He served on many civic committees and really knew people in St. Louis from the mayor on down. His smile was infectious and his sense of integrity was unmasked. He could work with the homeless, the hippies, the weird, the lonely and the scared, as well as with a group of young seminarians and nuns who came to the rectory to help out.

Father Shocklee made it possible for me and several of my Webster students to live in the Pruitt-Igoe area, in a house that was renovated in the neighborhood. We were there for about three years, working in the neighborhood, operating pre-school, conducting an after school study hall, acting as parole officers, if you will, for some teen-agers who found themselves in trouble. As you know, Father Shocklee had scores of volunteers who came to St. Bridget's, and he also had many seminarians that came from Kenrick Seminary. They worked very closely with us at Mullamphy House, named by the kids The Chocolate House because of the paint on the outside. John Shocklee gave us his time, sometimes his car, many of his friends who came as volunteers, and always this grand smile that made you know that any problem could be solved. He was a real model for so many of us, and when I went to St. Bridget's last year for the filming of a documentary

on Sisters of Selma, I realized that his presence was still there in a prominent way. One of our mutual friends, Rev. Don Register, a Presbyterian minister from Chicago now, worked with us in the inner-city, and he and I still chat about John Shocklee; the man, the priest, the innovator, the genius, and the wonderful friend that we all knew and loved. What else can I tell you?"²

Today, we often hear politicians speak of the "big tent" that represents their party. For John, the big tent was all of humanity, and the most important job was that of being a priest in one or another denomination. He was truly ecumenical and was recognized as such by all faiths. He once said about his appointment as a monsignor, "I don't want to be a monsignor. I can't afford all the trappings that go with the job. I'm a priest and that's enough." In an article by Olivia Skinner of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, about being a priest, John says, "If the Church is to bring people to God, whatever it does must be relevant to people's needs. The way to find out what they are is to keep your mouth shut and listen. When we find out their real needs, we rack our brains to find resources to meet them. Our main goal is to awaken human dignity."³

It made little difference to John what religion you claimed or if you adhered to no religion, because all of us are God's children. In a letter to Duncan Bauman, Editor of the St. Louis Globe Democrat, John recommends Mrs. Rose Boyarsky, Ph.D., to be named the Globe Democrat Woman of the Year.

"Mrs. Boyarsky is a Jewish person. Her concern for the chemically dependent poor is an expression of her living faith."⁴

Many of John's close friends were Protestant Ministers or Jewish Rabbis. Rabbi Jeffry Stiffman and John were also both Democrats and both civil rights activists. Both of them were invited to attend a Republican dinner honoring a member from each of their congregations. John was asked to give the benediction and Rabbi Stiffman was asked to give the blessing. They had a good laugh, since both of them were Democrats.⁵

Reverend Ted Schroeder, a Lutheran Minister, related about John being friends with a Jewish guy by the name of Bert Rosen and about them telling this story on one another." I don't know which of them started it, but one would ask how to convert to the other's religion. 'Why would you want to convert to my religion? Well, if your people are the only ones going to heaven, I want to be with you.' So Bert would become a Catholic, if that's what it took, and John would become a Jew, if that's what it took."

"I first met John when I was assigned to Emmanuel Lutheran Church and I stopped by to introduce myself. It was on that very first day, when I carried my lunch because I lived in the County. John insisted that I have lunch with him at St. Engelbert's. It became a habit for me to have lunch with John and whoever else was staying there, assistant priests or visitors. Herb Harrison comes to mind. He Was John's assistant and, since John also had responsibilities at the Human Rights' Office, Herb took over most of the parish

duties. John had been pastor at St.Bridget's for a number of years, before becoming the pastor of St. Engelbert's. He repeatedly would tell us about what happened at St. Bridget's. He would say, 'did I ever tell you about when this Lutheran Minister, Dave Schlee and I, used to do Good Friday'? John would go on to explain how they would gather up a group of people and go around Pruitt-Igoe carrying a big cross made with four by four boards. Since there were a lot of disasters, misfortune and crime in Pruitt-Igoe, as they walked the area they would come across a place where some misfortune occurred. They would stop and John would say this is where so and so was killed, and they would write on a piece of paper and nail it to the cross. They went around Pruitt-Igoe, stopping at every place a disaster had occurred, wrote each one on a piece of paper and nailed each one to the cross. It was the Stations of the Cross in real time. They would end the procession by tying the cross to a utility pole and leave it to be retrieved the next day. Herb and I decided that the only way to stop John from repeating the story over and over again was to start the program again at St. Engelbert's. So the program started again and soon involved seven churches. We would go to each church and finally end up at St. Engelbert's. The first year it rained and most of us drove our cars from church to church and only a few carried the cross. The second year it didn't happen because the clergy was having a big conflict with Mayor Conway. Since then we haven't missed a Good Friday"

Ted worked with John on numerous projects and they shared justice and human rights concerns, but probably the area in which they shared the most

interest was the need for jobs and their work with unions. As an example of his concern for jobs, John was supportive of Reverend Schroeder's efforts to keep the Chrysler Plant in Fenton open.

When John moved to St. Genevieve du Bois, their work together was significantly reduced. "I attended a meeting at St. Genevieve du Bois, and John was not at the meeting. I hadn't seen him for some time, so I went to the rectory to say hello. He invited me to come in and see his new digs. When John was sent to St. Genevieve, he didn't have any furniture, he didn't own a bed. The priest before him had taken the bed, so John had a mattress on the floor. I asked him how he came to be assigned to St. Genevieve. He told me that he told the archbishop that he didn't want to leave the city. It was Archbishop May, I believe. The archbishop pointed to a stack of paper and said, 'here's 52 letters from priests in the archdiocese telling me why they should be the next pastor of St. Genevieve du Bois. I will be damned if I will give it to any of them'. John asked the archbishop to only assign him there for five years and then let him go back to the city."⁶

"Shocklee described his term in the suburbs as very happy years with wonderful, deeply spiritual people. But his heart, he said, has been in the city for a long time."⁷ His heart may have been in the city, but he shared it with the people at St. Genevieve du Bois. When he left St. Genevieve to return to the city as Pastor of St. Liborius, Pamela Schaefer reported, "Shocklee had invigorated the parish and sharpened awareness of social problems, He

started parish council, and elected groups of lay-people to oversee parish affairs. He also started a St. Vincent de Paul Society, an organization that serves the poor, parish members prepare and serve meals twice a month at an inner-city parish and operate a food pantry at St. Liborius.”⁸

There were parishioners who opposed Shocklee’s appointment as Pastor of St. Genevieve, but most, if not all, changed their opinions once they got to know John. As one parishioner stated at a testimonial dinner held in his honor, “I’m a better person from knowing Monsignor John Shocklee”. Another parishioner, Bob Krekeler said, “When Monsignor Shocklee asked you to do something, it was very hard to say no, because he always asked in such a nice way. He set the tone that created a bond between him and the parishioners in his very first homily at St. Genevieve. ‘My mother, who was so proud of me, could not understand why I was never assigned a parish west of Kingshighway. So Mom, here I am.’”

I interviewed Mr. Krekeler on December 9, 2009. His family was in the wholesale grocery business that had been founded by his grandfather, and they serviced independent retail grocers. He told me that John had called their office around 1972, and asked if anyone there could help him start a food warehouse, which would be a supply line to neighborhood food pantries. Bob’s brother Gregory answered the phone and said that Bob would be the person to help because of his contacts in the food industry. Bob had been the president of St. Louis Allied Food Association and was well known by both retailers and manufacturers.

Bob contacted Shocklee and their first meeting was held at Christ Church Cathedral, along with volunteers and social workers from various agencies working with people in need. Having met with little success in the past, some of the social workers and volunteers were somewhat skeptical about Bob's being able to help, but John told them that Bob had volunteered to help and that he was optimistic about their success. That was the birth of the Food Crisis Network. Warehouses were set up, contacts made with retailers and food manufacturers, and a network of food pantries served. Because of Bob's contacts and status in the industry, manufacturers and retailers were happy to help. What started at the meeting in Christ Church Cathedral has grown to become The St. Louis Area Food Bank, but Catholic Charities first managed it. They hired a Lutheran named Bill Donavan to be the manager, and a Jewish gentleman named Bert Rosen, a long time friend of Msgr. Shocklee, volunteered there for many years. Shocklee was the catalyst and his ecumenism was evident from the start.

Bob Krekeler and John became friends long before John was the Pastor of St. Genevieve du Bois, but like most friends they got together only occasionally, more often when John would call for a little help. On one occasion, John told Bob that he was having a hard time getting enough sleep at St. Genevieve. Bob suggested that he might need a new bed, and that the parish had a number of people in the furniture business that could help. John said that it was not that – "I just miss the sound of sirens in the night".

Sometime after John had left St. Genevieve and became the Pastor at St. Liborius, Bob called him and asked if he would like to have lunch, and did he have a favorite restaurant. John said that he liked Maggie O'Brien's, so Bob called for a reservation. They don't take lunch reservations, he was told, but they would make an exception because Bob told them the person he was bringing along was elderly and could not stand and wait in line. When they got to the restaurant the maître d' went right over and gave John a hug.

"Monsignor Shocklee can sit at any table he wants", he said. Bob said that everyone there knew Msgr. Shocklee, and it was obvious that everyone was very fond of him.⁹

John's relationship with the staff of the Human Rights' Office was such that speaking of the staff reflected John and speaking of John often was a reflection of the staff. In the eyes of many John was the Human Rights' Office. "John's leadership allowed the Human Rights Office staff to maintain several things at the same time. He brought in good people and let them function in their own way.¹⁰ John had the good sense to give the staff a lot of freedom to do the jobs they were doing. He was really good at hiring very smart people and then leaving them alone.¹¹ Still, it was John's vision that moved HRO in one or another direction. "I think John's heart was truly with the black community in St. Louis. He remained true to being a bridge between the African-American community and the official Catholic Church in St. Louis. No matter what other issues the office staff branched out into (Nuclear Weapons

Freeze, Central America, etc.); what interested John most, what impassioned him to continue in the struggle was how social issues impacted those most in need."

"John was asked to go to a hearing in South County regarding putting some Section 8 units amidst middle income housing. John favored scattered site housing efforts, which would bring about economic, as well as racial, integration. John was asked to testify, so Rich Creason, John and I went. When John's name was called to testify, some really big guy yelled, 'here's the guy who gave us Pruitt-Igoe'. John walked right up to the podium, gave his three minute speech, and before returning to his seat walked straight over to the guy and asked to shake his hand. The guy really had a hard time doing it, but finally did. John later told us that he always refused to let someone intimidate him and usually tensions would dissipate a bit if addressed on the human level."

"John told the staff he was going to a meeting somewhere on the North side in the afternoon. Couple of hours later, we started to get phone calls from various TV channels wanting to interview John regarding the Catholic position on Famous-Barr not having African American models in the newspaper advertisements, not many upper level management positions filled by African-Americans. No one on the staff knew anything about 'our position' and so we attempted to put off the TV personnel until we could find John. It seems John had attended a news conference in the afternoon, declaring that the Catholic Church was just going to have to declare a boycott of Famous- Barr, if

something could not be worked out. Who knows if John really said it that way, but that's how the media heard it. Now this was in the 80s, when we had a very specific process for the Commission on Human Rights to take a position on a particular issue. Not John, however. If something was on his mind, as Joe Wiley would say, you never knew exactly when or where it would be said. To all the staff's absolute amazement, the May Company flew someone from Atlanta the following day. John and Thelma Lewis attended the meeting along with those folks at the news conference and eventually, the whole matter got settled. So much for process.¹²

John loved horses and loved to ride. "The police department was selling off horses, and since John liked to ride he got one. He got the horse at 12th and Clark, goes to Natural Bridge, and rides the horse to his mother's place in Pine Lawn. His mother said, 'get that horse out of here', so he sold the horse.¹³

John's abiding interest in education was evident in almost everything he did. In Catholic education his concerns centered on establishing new schools and keeping those that existed. "Had it not been for Father Shocklee, there would not be a Cardinal Ritter High School. DeAndreis had just been closed in 1976, and Laboure was going to be next. The population was becoming predominantly black, and Father Shocklee knew that. He asked for an audience with Father Leibrecht, now retired Bishop Leibrecht, the Superintendent of Schools, and made a case for not just closing every school

on the North side. He got permission to establish a committee, a public committee, and this committee would determine what they would want established on the North side. That became Cardinal Ritter High School."¹⁴

He was also very supportive of teachers and worried as the number of nuns teaching continued to be diminished. He never failed to mention the low pay level of teachers in Catholic Schools as compared to the pay in the public school system. But even in the Public School system, John felt that teachers were not adequately paid. "I remember a time when the Missouri Catholic Conference was opposing legislation to put public health nurses in the public schools. John was furious and opposed the Catholic Conference position. John would not go for building Catholics up by pulling other people down. When it costs the Public Schools \$10,000 to educate a child, it is because they pay real salaries, and the Catholics should do the same."

"John was very strong on Public Education. The Human Rights' Office got involved in a school board election in 1991, when there was a whole crop of white rights candidates. John led the charge. We had leaflets, information sessions, and we had the archbishop take a stand. We made it clear that if you were a good Catholic and you ablded by the Church on social issues, you couldn't vote for people who were going to polarize the public schools along racial lines."

John recognized the importance of money in providing good education and maintaining both the Catholic and the Public schools. "John opposed a large redevelopment effort that would provide tax relief for the developer,

because it would take money out of the schools. Also, he always supported taxes for the schools. There was legislation passed to roll back taxes for the schools. To prevent that, it was placed on the ballot every year, and every year John would say we have to support defeating the role back."¹⁵

John was the first Administer for Du Bourg High School and Floyd Hacker was the first Lay Teacher at DuBourg. He later became a beloved Principal for over 30 years. Floyd related how Father Shocklee was very trusting of the students. "A new kid just came in. He was only there about a week. We had a parent teachers' meeting and John asked the boy whether he could drive. The boy said that he could and John gave him the keys to his car and told him it was in the back of the school, and would he bring it around to the front. When all the parents were gone and only he and I remained, we went out and his car wasn't there. His first conclusion was that the kid did not know how to drive. We went to the back and it wasn't there either. He had stolen the car and had an accident, and went and left the car not too far from the school. Then the police came and here was John Shocklee, owner of the car. He straightened that out and he laughed and said, 'I should have known better'."¹⁶

Far from being his only interest, still civil rights and the African-American Community was high on his agenda. It figured in on much that he said or did, and it related to his over-all view of human rights. "Lots of unrest here in the 1960s, especially around the area of St. Bridget's. There were some blacks

down there stirring the people up. They said that they wanted to have a meeting, and they didn't want any whites there. Father Shocklee offered them St. Bridget's for them to hold the meeting. Father Shocklee was in the back of the room folding some chairs and one of the guys in the front said, 'who is the white guy back there'. 'That's no white guy back there; that's Father Shocklee.' 'Oh, then ask him to come up here with us.' That's the way Father Shocklee was – not white, not black, but human. And that's the way people looked at him."¹⁷

It is difficult to separate human rights and civil rights from his humane approach to all people of whatever persuasion, even when their actions were abhorrent to his beliefs of right and wrong. "There was a priest who got arrested for soliciting male prostitutes in Tower Grove Park. If he didn't go to jail, he was still publicly disgraced. He was a jerk, and he was mean to people and nobody liked him. One day I asked John what he was going to do, and he said that he was taking monsignor so and so to lunch. He said, 'nobody likes him and they shouldn't – he's mean, but somebody's got to be nice to the poor guy'. I said, 'John, good for you. Nobody's too bad, nobody's too sinful, for you to be nice to them.'"¹⁸

John was ever ready to help civil rights' workers in any way he could, with money, support, and participation. Charles Koen, a civil rights' advocate working in the Boot Heel area of Missouri, was in jail and before a judge who would not negotiate with his attorney. John was asked by the attorney to

intervene with the judge. John was able to negotiate Koen's release from jail, and Koen agreed to apologize to the court for his disruptive scene in the court. Only the judge, Shocklee, Koen, and Koen's lawyer knew this bargain. Shocklee received no credit, nor wished for any public recognition. Instead, he wanted credit to go to blacks, for they were the ones who needed it.

When asked in a radio interview whether he still hated whites, Koen replied, "Yes, except for three. Harold Gibbons, who helped blacks get jobs, Judge Davidson, who let me out, and Father John Shocklee".¹⁹

It is very obvious that John was unassuming and was not really interested in getting credit. Father Jerry Kleba, in a taped interview, talks about a testimonial dinner he planned for John. "I had a real problem getting John to return calls while planning the dinner, so that I could determine an appropriate date. After the dinner, John called me at least five times to thank me, and finally I said to him, 'do you know how close we came to not having this affair'? You didn't return my phone calls, you wouldn't give me a list of friends, and you practically made it impossible for me to put this thing together. Why John, why? He answered, 'Because I didn't think anyone would come'".²⁰

In all of John's many activities, nothing was more important to him than his being a pastor. In fact, all other accomplishments were a part of what he considered his pastoral duties. Bishop O'Donnell said, "John's pastoral ministry was very important to John and is reflected in all that he did. The march to Selma, for instance, was very significant. The way to look on church

life is based on his pastoral ministry. He made Homer G. Phillips a kind of place to give the men and women of Pruitt-Igoe a place for health care. Homer G. and City Hospital both touched him the same way. He was pastor for the Teamsters Union, and he brought the Farm Workers to dinner with the various Pastors to get their suggestions.²¹ Everything that John did was reflected in his concept of being a pastor.

As a Pastor, Father Shocklee's everyday activities, those involving the needs of his parishioners and his relationships with them, are not generally known to the public. They are, however, what his parishioners remember about him and what established the bond of love between them. Quoting from The History of Black Catholicism in St. Louis, by Ivan James, which indicated that Father Shocklee perceived the problems of the 1960's as being in the areas of employment and open housing, Jane Brown wrote the following; "It is very evident that Monsignor Shocklee was not simply making philosophical statements. He put his concepts about fair employment into concrete actions through working with one of the largest employers in the St. Louis area, General Motors Corporation. He was personally involved with recommending my husband for the very best job he has had in his work history! Through Msgr. Shocklee's intervention, my husband and other selected young men were recommended and given priority to be considered as applicants at the Chevrolet Plant at 3917 Union Boulevard in St. Louis. My husband proudly worked there for 19+ years. For a young couple with high aspirations for obtaining gainful employment with great benefits and buying our home in

good neighborhood, this was a Godsend! Msgr. Shocklee commands a very special place in our hearts.”²²

Father Shocklee’s place in the hearts of all of his parishioners is further illustrated in an email received on August 20, 2009 from Mr. Calzona Hall.

“I am ecstatic that you have taken an interest in Monsignor John A. Shocklee because he was the greatest; a giant among men. I first met him when he was assigned to St. Englebert (now St. Elizabeth) in the early eighties. I found him to be people oriented and was interested in all the families he shepherded. He not only knew the family names but he knew all the children’s first names as well. He accomplished this in a very short period of time, to everyone’s surprise. He was easy to approach and his homilies were very enlightening. He always gave to the poor and some not so very poor. My fondest memory was when he gave me 3 bicycles for my three girls, even though I thought that I could afford them, especially if I made a few sacrifices. Well, he didn’t care and gave me the bikes anyway. As it turns out my girls wouldn’t ride the bikes because they were not the latest fashion. Recognizing the ungratefulness of my children, I gave the bikes to neighborhood kids who enjoyed them immensely. I guess Monsignor knew that those bikes would be of great value to the needy. Needless to say my girls never got bikes and they learned a valuable lesson, which they remember to this day.

All parishioners loved Monsignor. When the Knights of Peter Claver was established at St. Engebert, both council #213 (Men) and court #213 (Ladies)

recognized his love for church and people, named their respective unit in his honor. He not only supported the organization, he joined the Knights.

He mentioned on numerous occasions how he loved the poor parishes and how he would like to spend his entire life serving the poor. He loved the inner-city parishes and when he got assigned to a parish in West County, although he was happy there, he soon returned to the downtown area.

He served parishioners not only spiritually but also in any way he could. He obtained jobs and promotions for numerous people in the neighborhood. Needless to say that recipients of this generosity would never know unless someone else told them. He was very active in the area of civil rights and did so when it was not popular. His work in this area made possible opportunities for a host of people.

The last time the wife and I visited him at the Little Sisters of the Poor, he was not totally himself but he recognized us and asked about the well being of all our children. He also inquired about numerous parishioners and showed concern for every one while he lay there during his final days. He is truly loved and missed.”²³

Father Patrick Sullivan, Chaplain of the Labor Guild of the Archdiocese of Boston, spoke about his many visits with Monsignor Shocklee, during his trips to St. Louis as a liaison between union organizations. He told of Msgr. Shocklee holding a press conference to announce the support of the St. Louis Archdiocese for a boycott of J.P. Stevens' products. Reporters at the conference knew that Shocklee had the reputation of sometimes acting on his

own. Father Sullivan said one of the reporters from a conservative paper, thinking he could trip Shocklee up, asked, "How do you know the archdiocese supports the boycott, when the Cardinal is in Rome?" Shocklee said, "Glad you asked", and pulled a telegram from the Cardinal from his pocket and read it for the reporters.²⁴

This book is about one priest, one life, but it is representative of the lives of millions of men and women religious of all denominations around the world. Monsignor Shocklee was loved and admired by the people of St. Louis, but his reach went far beyond St. Louis or Missouri, as shown by the awards he received over the years.

1. 1966 ----Democracy In Action from The St. Louis Council of The American Jewish Congress.
2. 1967 ----The Missouri Association of Social Workers Award for Distinguished outstanding Service.
3. 1973----The Human Rights Award from The St. Louis Chapter of The United Nations.
4. 1974----The Negro History Award
5. 1978----The ACFL-CIO Distinguished Citizen Award
6. 1979----Brotherhood Citation Award from the St.Louis Chapter of The National Conference of Christians and Jews
7. 1981----The Missouri Bar Young Lawyers Liberty Bell Award.
8. 1983----Humanitarian Award from The Israel Histadrut
9. 1984----Citizens of Labor Award for Consumer Protection.

1. FAMILY AND FORMITIVE YEARS

On the day of his birth, was John Shocklee offered to God for the Priesthood? At least one family member believed he was. "The mother made the offering of him to God, saying, I want him to be a priest, and holding him on the paten of her two hands said, this is your child God. To us you have entrusted it."¹ His aunt, Sister Mary Vincent, wrote this account for the family at the time of his ordination. Other members of the family doubt that this ever happened, and averred that it was not like anything that their mother would do. Not-with-standing their doubts, they agreed that John's interest in becoming a priest surfaced very early. He attended daily Mass and was an altar boy; he was studious and worked for the benefit of the family, a working class family of seven boys and three girls that needed all to do their share. When his cousin asked him when he decided to become a priest; John mentioned that when he was serving Mass for Father White, he noticed that the priest had holes in his shoes. He was thinking about being a priest, as young Catholic boys did in those days, and he thought that if he could be a priest he would want to be like Father White and work for the poor.² Sue Ann Tretter, who interviewed Monsignor Shocklee for her dissertation, quoted him as stating that he thought about a priestly vocation while a student at

St. Louis University High School.³ His siblings were unanimous in feeling that he wanted to be a priest very early in life, and one might conclude from his activities as a boy that this was the case. John was a daily communicant and entered the Seminary High School before attending St. Louis University High School.

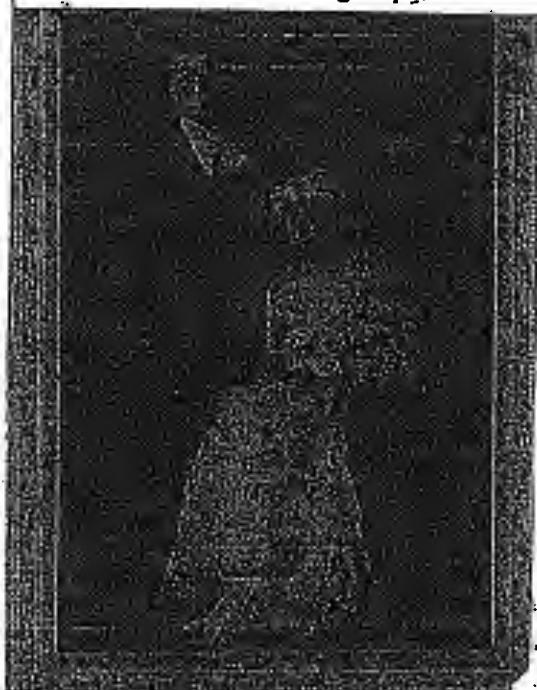
John Shocklee was the oldest of the children born to John Willis Shocklee and Mary Elizabeth Young. He was born in Wellsville, Missouri on July 3, 1917, and was baptized in the Church of the Resurrection, the church his parents attended. Resurrection Parish was formed in 1873 and originally Mass was said in the homes of the parishioners. On Easter Sunday of 1881, Father John Head blessed the cornerstone of the frame church with a steeple, and called it the Church of The Resurrection because of the feast day.

As the oldest of the ten children, John was often called upon to take care of the other children. His sister, Grace O'Brien, said that John was always concerned about the family and was proud that he was one of ten kids. He thought that God must have loved our mother to give her ten children. The older kids, especially John, had to take care of the younger ones. "He was always kind to us and never did a mean thing to anyone."⁴

His family was a devout Catholic family, going back to 1662 when his ancestor, John Worlend, landed in Maryland with Charles Calvert, who became the third Lord Baltimore in 1675. The Worlend connection is the result of the marriage between Mary Ann Worlend and James Robert Shocklee in 1861 at Wellsville, Missouri. According to

John Willis and Maria Elizabeth Shocklee

John's Parents on Wedding Day

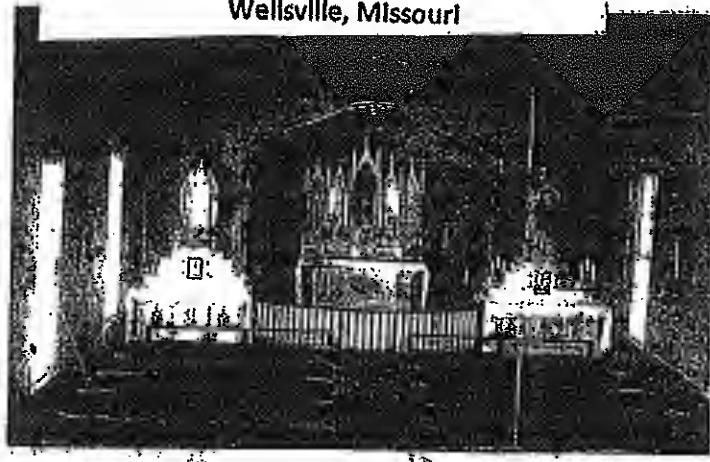


John's Baby Picture



Resurrection Catholic Church

Wellsville, Missouri



John with his mother

Grade School Graduation



John & Mom

Front Row from Left

David-Mother-John-Father-Tim

Second Row from Left

Joe-Celeste-Lawrence-Mary Elizabeth-Bill-Grace-Don

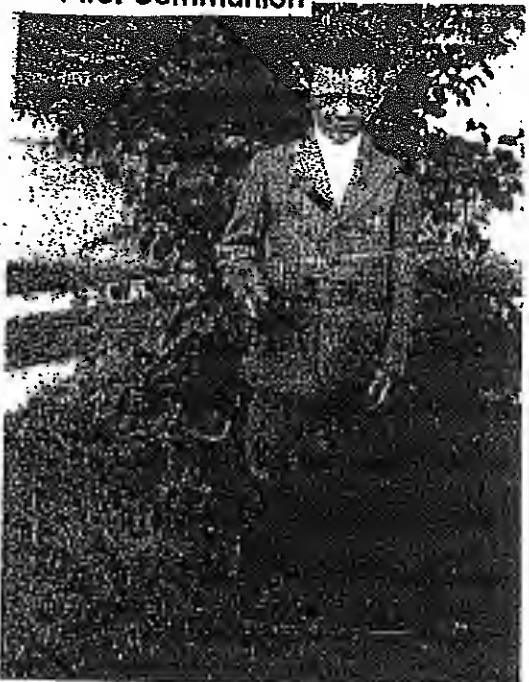


John, Marie and Thomas 1943

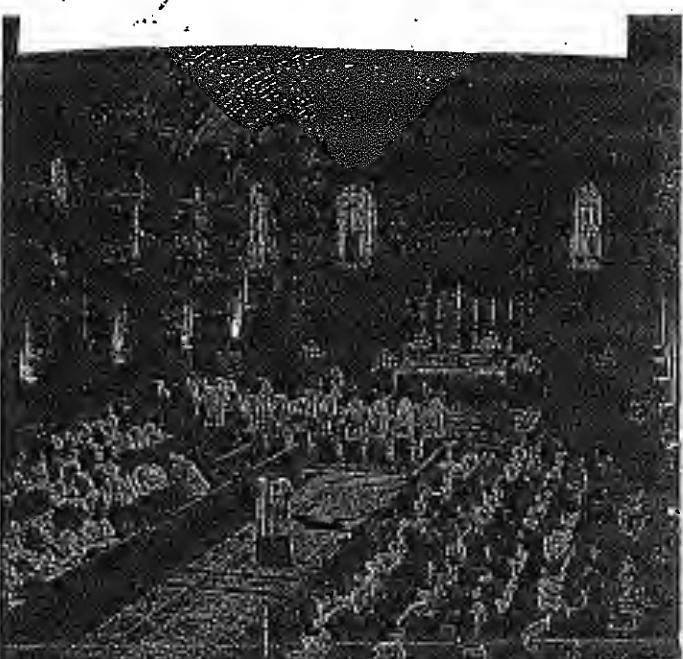
An Early Mass



First Communion



Ordination at The Cathadral



the genealogy of the Worland family, there were 450 people living in 1962 with both Worland and Shocklee blood.⁵

John Worland was born in England, probably in London. A persistent family tradition is that he came to Maryland around 1662 with Lord Baltimore. If, indeed, he came to the colony with Lord Baltimore, it would have to have been with Charles Calvert, who arrived in the colony in 1661 at the age of 24 and was appointed Deputy Governor. He was not Lord Baltimore until he inherited the title and was made Proprietary Governor of the Colony of Maryland at the death of his father in 1675.⁶ The obvious contradiction in dates of arrival is no doubt an error on the part of the genealogist. All the information regarding the Worland and Shocklee relationship comes from the genealogy found in The History and Genealogy of the Worland Family in America, 1662-1962.

There is some indication that John Worland was possibly a Protestant, but it could have been that he came to America because of the oppression of Catholics in England and concealed the fact that he was Catholic. The restoration of the Monarchy under Charles II in 1660 strengthened the Church of England, and the subsequent passage of the Clarendon Code by Parliament was oppressive to those who did not subscribe to the Anglican faith. At the same time, the Protestant population of Maryland was in the majority, even though the Baltimores were Catholic and founded Maryland as a Catholic Colony. Regardless of whether the first Worland to enter America was Protestant or Catholic, the history of the family is replete with the names of priests and nuns, and the family is proud of its contribution to the growth of Catholicism in the

United States. The Worland family remained in Maryland until about the end of the 18th century, when most of the family can be found in Kentucky. Also, by this time the family was definitely Catholic. Thomas and Barnabas Worland joined with a group of sixty families to form a Catholic Community in Scott County, Kentucky. They became parishioners of Father Stephen Theodore Badin, reportedly the first Catholic Priest ordained in the United States. Bishop John Carroll ordained him. Although the family spread across the country, it was in Missouri where the Worlands and the Shocklees came together.

The Shocklee genealogy is found as a supplement to the Genealogy of the Worland Family. The first Shocklee in America was William Shocklee, who is reported to have arrived in Virginia around 1774. It is interesting to note that he came as a Methodist Minister, a Protestant like the first John Worland. And, like the Worland branch of the family, the Shocklees can boast of a number of nuns and priests. The Worland and Shocklee families came together in 1861 with the marriage of James Robert Shocklee, William's grandson, and Mary Ann Worland, nicknamed "Polly", daughter of Stephen Willis Worland and Sarah Eleanor Blacklock. An excerpt from the History of St. Charles, Montgomery and Warren County, Missouri stated, "Mr. James Robert Shocklee is well-known to be one of the substantial and successful farmers and stock raisers, as well as one of the worthy and highly respected citizens of this township. His homestead contains 380 acres of fine land, all well improved, besides 40 acres of tributary timber. He is extensively and successfully engaged in raising grain and stock."⁷ In 1861, at the beginning of the Civil War, he enlisted in the Confederate Army, He was made prisoner after the Battle in Fulton, Missouri, and required to take an

oath of loyalty in order to return to his home. After that, he took no further part in the war, but settled on 80 acres and began to farm. He is listed in the Worland genealogy as a judge.

Mary Ann Worland and James Robert Shocklee had six children, one of whom was James Willis who, like his father before him, became a judge. James Willis Shocklee was Monsignor Shocklee's grandfather and a highly respected judge in Montgomery County, Missouri. As a devout Catholic, he was proud that his children and grandchildren served the church as priests and nuns. Three of his grandsons, John Shocklee, Joseph Portuchek and Joseph Shocklee were priests. Joseph Shocklee left the priesthood to marry. James Willis's sister, Elizabeth, was a nun and took the name Sister Mary Saint Vincent and his granddaughter, Mary Wilma Burke, was a Divine Providence nun and took the name Sister Mary Rose. He lived to be 94 and maintained his home until his death in 1956. Comments by the Wellsville Optic News on the occasion of Judge Shocklee's ninety-first birthday indicate that even at his advance age he was fiercely independent. "He lives alone at his home and looks after the duties of his house and the cooking. This summer he tended his own garden. Through the years he has been especially faithful to his church. Even now despite his advanced years he attends daily mass unless his health makes it impossible. He rarely lets the weather interfere with his daily trip to the house of God."⁸ Martha Shocklee Sutter, Monsignor Shocklee's cousin, recounted that on a visit to his grandfather's home John told his grandfather that he really should do a little cleaning up around the place. His grandfather responded by indicating that he was not bothered by the condition of his house, but rather he was more concerned about that house upstairs.

Years later, when Monsignor Shocklee was in a nursing home, he was asked whether he worried about a comment he made about a certain archbishop. His response, very much like his grandfather's, was "I'm not worried about here; I only have to worry about the man upstairs."

Monsignor Shocklee's father, John Willis Shocklee, was born in Wellsville, Missouri on February 14, 1893. His mother, Mary Isabel Young was born on November 4, 1894 in St. Louis. They were married on June 5, 1916, in St. Louis at St. Theresa Catholic Church. They returned to Wellsville where John Willis farmed about 60 acres that he received from his father.

A declaration of war passed the Congress on April 6, 1917 and the United States entered WW I, sometimes referred to as the Great War. When war was declared, the standing army could not produce sufficient troops. President Wilson proposed a national draft, and the Congress passed the Selective Service Act in May of 1917. John Willis was exempted from the draft both because he was married and because he was a farmer. During World War One, farmers were able to make a good living. In addition to providing food for the citizens of the United States, the American farmers were obliged to send large quantities of food to the American allies, England and France. Food was critical during the war years when the United States was sending food in support of allies. Duane Meyer, in his The Heritage of Missouri: A History, said that wheat was selling at \$2.20 a bushel and corn was at \$1.38 a bushel. John Shocklee could make a decent living at those prices.

By 1920 the price of wheat had dropped below a dollar a bushel and corn had dropped even farther. John Willis was unable to make an adequate living farming, with

prices of wheat and corn at such low levels. . Farmers around the country began to have problems making mortgage payments and paying for equipment purchased during the good years. Many families lost their farms and found it necessary to move to cities, where there were job opportunities. John Willis was unable to make a living on the farm and was encouraged by Mary Elizabeth's parents to move to St. Louis.

John Willis was fortunate in being able to obtain a position in Public Works as a streetcar conductor. Job opportunities were available for some, but the influx of immigrants from the South in the early 1920's created competition for many jobs, particularly laboring jobs. Conflicts between blacks and whites were tense, and whites accused blacks of taking their jobs. The East St. Louis race riot of 1917, claimed by some to be the worst race riot in U. S. History, was a massacre by white workers, reportedly killing hundreds of men, women and children. The white workers claimed that blacks were taking their jobs, and, also, they wished to maintain racial segregation in housing. The Chicago race riot of 1919 killed 23 blacks and 15 whites and erupted when a black steered his raft near a beach considered to be white territory. These instances were highly publicized but were far from being the only racial conflicts in the country. Racial tension occurred around the country in the years immediately following World War One, and was exacerbated by returning veterans, who placed an increased demand on employment opportunities.

John Willis left the public service job and was employed by the Metropolitan Insurance Company, but when the economy went down he held a number of different jobs. Monsignor Shocklee's siblings indicated in interviews that their parents were good parents and hard workers. "We were never hungry or without shoes", Grace said, and

"my mother was a miracle worker. We had a happy life." Msgr. Shocklee's father was a dedicated family man and an example to his children. During WW II St. Louis was asking for volunteers to serve in some capacity for the defense of the city. "John W. Shocklee, father of ten children and an employee of the St. Louis Public Service Company volunteered because he wanted his children 'to have the same freedom and the same opportunity that I have had in this country'."⁹ John Willis worked for Quality Dairy during the early years of the depression, but returned to public service as a mechanic in 1934 and remained employed there until his retirement in 1956. John Willis died in 1958 at age 65.

In a working class family with ten children everyone had to do his part, but a greater responsibility fell to the oldest, John. As a boy, he was very diligent and took his responsibilities seriously. He recognized the need to be frugal at a very early age. His sister Grace said that, at age eight, he was sent to the store to shop for a certain item and he was told to also check on some underpants that were on sale. When he returned home without the underpants he told his mother that it was not a good bargain. Even at the age of eight he was concerned about spending too much money.

John was always a conscientious student and made good grades. He first attended St. Barbara's Elementary School, where he received his first Holy Communion, then the family moved to Pine Lawn where he attended St. Paul's Catholic School. John's mother never had to wake him and make him go to Mass, as he would wake-up very early on his own and attend daily Mass. He was an altar boy and probably began thinking of the priesthood during his years at St. Paul's. He was graduated from St. Paul's in 1930 and entered Seminary Prep, also referred to as the Cathedral Latin

School.

Because the seminary was expensive, it was necessary for him to work to pay for his tuition and books. After school he worked in a neighborhood grocery store before going home. In the summer he mowed grass at the Calvary Cemetery. Still, he wasn't able to keep up with the tuition at the seminary, but he was fortunate enough to get some scholarship help to go to St. Louis University High School. During these years he attended both schools. He took his freshman and sophomore years at the Seminary School, his junior year was split between the Seminary School and St. Louis University High School, and his senior year was at St. Louis University High School. In his freshman year at the Seminary, sometimes called the Latth School, John studied English and Algebra. He studied English and Geometry at St. Louis University High School. Although he found it necessary to work to pay for his tuition, he maintained an A and B grade average, and he was an active member of both the Sodality and Classical Clubs. John graduated in 1935 and entered St. Louis Preparatory Seminary.

During his years at the seminary, John was involved in student activities; he played soccer and tennis, and probably learned to play golf. He played the organ and the piano, sang bass in the chorus, was listed as a Caroler in the program notes for the Seminary's 1940 Christmas Pageant, and began an interest in Jazz that continued throughout his life.

At the seminary, John was part of a group of twelve friends who supported one another during their seminary years and continued to be friends after ordination. The twelve of them were from the St. Louis Archdiocese; others were from diocese around the country. John was active in the theater productions that were held periodically and

continued his interest in music, playing both the piano and organ. He was popular as a student and made friendships that lasted during his life as a priest. One classmate, Father S.W. Bauer, said of John that he was a friendly and caring person, and that he was admired for his musical talents. He recalled that John played soccer and really played hard. Father Bauer, who was to have many contacts with Father Shocklee and his work with the poor, said that one of the most disheartening things in their seminary days was that social teaching was almost totally lacking. It was later, during his work at St. Leo's with Monsignor John Butler, that Catholic Social Teaching took root for Father Shocklee.

The class of 1943 was ordained on December 19, 1942 one year after the December 7 bombing of Pearl Harbor. Normally, the class would have been ordained in June of 1943, but their ordination was moved up because of the war. Around the country, parish vacancies existed as priests entered the armed forces as chaplains, and Missouri was no exception. For example, the Director of Catholic Rural Life in Missouri indicated on his application to the Automobile Rating Board that in Missouri six counties were without a priest, and eight counties had only one priest. Catholic priests were assigned to prisoner of war camps as well as the military, and they were also stationed as chaplains at universities where soldiers were stationed.

Although ordained in December of 1942, the class received their initial assignments in June of 1943. Some of the class remained at the Seminary and did fill in assignments while awaiting their permanent assignments, while others were given contingent assignments that were confirmed in June. Father Shocklee was given such an assignment to St. Leo's, where he remained as an assistant until 1958. In the fall of

1943, Father Shocklee was assigned to teach at DeAndres High School.

The powerful bishop for the U.S. Armed Forces, Cardinal Francis Spellman, urged American Bishops to encourage eligible priests to enlist as chaplains. Cardinal Spellman was perhaps the most influential American Bishop of the twentieth century. His biographer John Cooney titled the biography, The American Pope: The Life and Times of Francis Cardinal Spellman.¹⁰ From 1925 to 1932 he was attached to the Secretariat of State in Rome, and he became a close friend of Eugenio Pacelli, the Secretary of State, who became Pope Pius XII. In 1932, he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop to Cardinal William O'Connell of Boston. In 1939, his friend Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli became Pope and appointed him Archbishop of New York, as well as Archbishop of the Military in the United States. He was made a Cardinal in 1939.

Although a recognized conservative, Spellman became a close friend of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He supported a strong American foreign policy and warned against the dangers of communism. He was in every way a hawk and was criticized for his strong support of the Vietnam War.

During WW II, Cardinal Spellman traveled widely both in the United States and abroad visiting military installations to oversee the work of the Catholic chaplains. He also took an interest in the chaplains serving the prisoner of war camps, as did Pius XII. An example of the Pope's interest is a telegram to Archbishop Glennon from Archbishop Cicognani, the Apostolic delegate, requesting that Glennon express the Pope's Christmas Greetings to the German war prisoners in camps in Missouri.¹¹ On December 19, 1945, a letter from the Apostolic Delegate to Monsignor John Cody, the St. Louis

Diocesan Chancellor, contained a check for \$400 in favor of the German prisoners at Ft. Leonard Wood, as a Christmas gift from the Pope.¹² Although there were both German and Italian prisoner of war camps in Missouri, the Pope only sent Christmas Greetings to the German prisoners of war. This is especially interesting since Pope Pius was Italian and since he has been accused of being sympathetic to the Germans during WW II. Nevertheless, the Pope, in a letter to Msgr. John P. Cody from the Apostolic Delegate, requested the names of all Italian prisoners of war at camp Weingarten so that their families could be notified. Also, in the name of the Pope 1000 rosaries were distributed to prisoners of war in Missouri. Chapels were to be built in all internment camps and Italian priests who were prisoners were permitted to assist at Mass.

After the war, Cardinal Spellman became close friends with both Senator Joseph McCarthy and his close associate, Roy Cohn. According to his biographer, John Cooney, he continued to support U.S. military adventures by visiting troops, attending Pentagon briefings, and discussing strategy with the generals. He lobbied for diplomatic relations between the United States and the Vatican and supported American involvement in Vietnam. Cardinal Spellman was a potent political force until his death in 1967. During both WWII and Vietnam, he travelled widely and often visited troops both those stationed in the United States and those stationed abroad. The Annual Report of the Military Ordinariate, November 6, 1946, stated that there were an extraordinary number of veterans applying to seminaries to study for the priesthood. Certainly Spellman's close association with the military and individual soldiers was partly responsible for this. He was a strong opponent of contraception, and he lobbied for

parochial schools to get public funding. In 1949. After Eleanor Roosevelt wrote in opposition to federal aid to parochial schools, he accused her of anti-Catholicism. Later in the same year, both parties issued statements that softened their positions. Like most political figures, Cardinal Spellman made enemies and was often embroiled in scandal. However, he remained until his death a powerful political influence.

Father Shocklee was greatly influenced by the truly historic priests who were his predecessors in St. Louis. St. Louis was founded and settled by Catholics and Catholic priests played an important role in its development, according to Monsignor Joseph W. Baker in his essay on Roman Catholics in St. Louis, which appeared in Religions In St. Louis, Edited by Robert P. Jacobs, Interfaith Clergy Council, 1976. "Inasmuch as all of the settlers who established St. Louis were Catholic, it seems strange that there was no Catholic priest among them. As a matter of fact, there was only one priest in the Upper Louisiana Territory at the time, Father Sebastian L. Muerin, S.J. For the first few years, before a permanent church was built in St. Louis, Mass was celebrated in the homes of parishioners." Following Father Muerin were such notables as Father Pierre Gigault, who was called the Patriot Priest; Bishop William DuBourg, who brought both the Sisters of Loretto and the Religious of the Sacred Heart to teach girls; Bishop Joseph Rosati, the first bishop of the St. Louis Diocese; and Archbishop Kenrick who, as a participant in the first Vatican Council in 1870, opposed the definition of papal infallibility. These were men who helped form the City of St. Louis, the city called by Archbishop Kenrick the most Catholic city in the country and " in many ways reflects the true spirit of Catholicism".¹³

Father Shocklee's first assignment was very important in his development as a

priest concerned with social justice and all that entails. His work with the poor and with the black population of St. Louis, his advocacy for workers and his work with unions, and later his concern for the struggles of people in Central and South America and Africa, was nourished by this first assignment at St. Leo's Catholic Church and School, located in the Kerry Patch district of St. Louis. Kerry Patch was named by an immigrant group from County Kerry, Ireland around 1842. Although the first residents were Irish immigrants, they were later joined by both Polish and Germans. Blacks in large numbers settled in the area during the migration from the South at the time of the Depression and World War II.

St. Leo's was founded 1888 and its first pastor was Father Jeremiah Harty, who was from Kerry Patch and as a child resided in St. Bridget's Parish. Father Harty was responsible for the construction of St. Leo's church, school and parsonage. In the beginning, mass was celebrated in private homes, since the church building had not been constructed. The cornerstone for the church was laid on September 1, 1889, and the church was dedicated on November 29, 1894. The parish school was completed in June of 1903.

Father James Thomas Coffee succeeded Father Harty on December 14, 1903, and remained the pastor until July 20, 1931, when he was succeeded by Father John Joseph Butler. Father Butler, later Monsignor Butler, was the pastor of St. Leo's when John Shocklee was assigned to be his assistant after ordination in December of 1942. It is important to understand Father Butler in order to fully understand Father Shocklee. Both men came from working class families with similar backgrounds. To understand the importance of this first assignment, we must look at the Pastor of St. Leo's, with

whom John would work as an Assistant Pastor.

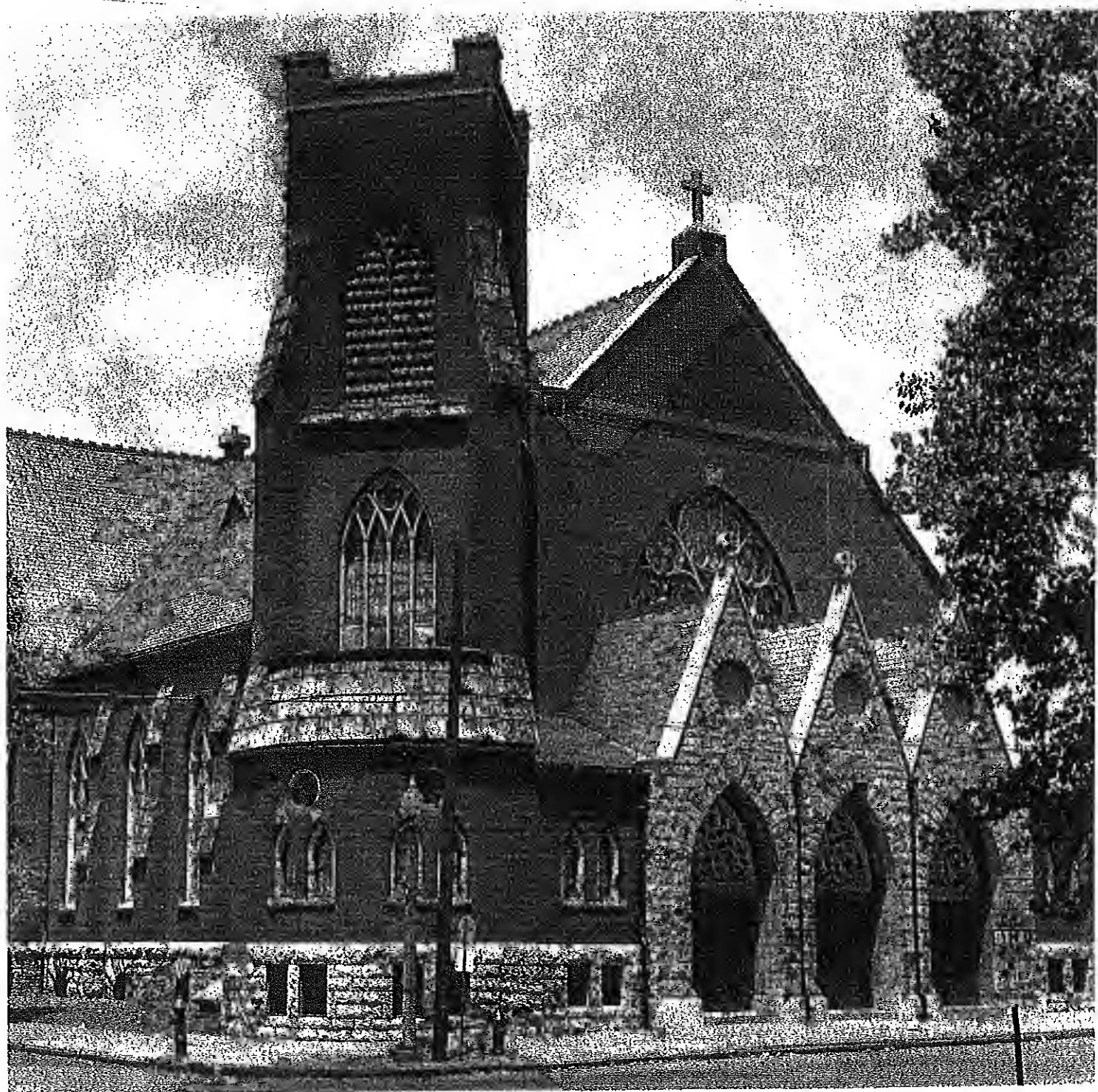
The Pastor, Monsignor John J. Butler, came from a family background closely resembling John's. His father worked as a day laborer at \$1.50 a day, and the family consisted of nine children, five boys and four girls. John Butler was born in Kerry Patch on February 23, 1883, and attended St. Theresa's School before entering Kenrick Preparatory seminary in 1900. Father Butler was ordained a priest on December 21, 1911.

Growing up in a poor family in Kerry Patch gave Father Butler special insights into those people living in poverty, and especially the people of St Leo's and Kerry Patch. Very early after his ordination, Father Butler was appointed Assistant at St. Lawrence O'Toole Parish, where he began his work with the society of St. Vincent de Paul. In his work with the society of St. Vincent de Paul, he was appointed by Archbishop Glennon to be the guardian of the interests of Catholic children who were in the juvenile court system. He continued his work with the society and, while Pastor of St. Leo's, he was also the Executive Secretary of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Father Butler, then Monsignor Butler, continued to work in the interests of the poor and vulnerable his entire life as a priest. In addition to his duties as the Pastor of St. Leo's, he was President of Catholic Charities, Executive Secretary of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Director and Executive of Ozanam Shelter for men, Member of the Board of Directors of the Community Chest, charter member and member of the Board of Directors of Social Planning Council, Member, Board of Directors of St. Leo Center, Board of Directors of the Child Center of Our Lady of Grace, Member of the Board of Directors of Stella Maris Day Care Center, Member, Missouri State Board, Mid-Century



Monsignor John Joseph Butler



St. Leo's Catholic Church

White House Conference, and in 1956, founded the Villa Maria Home for Unwed Mothers. He helped organize the United Fund of St. Louis, and was active in many other state and local agencies relating to assistance of the poor. Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter called him "the happy warrior of Catholic Charities", and he was the first priest to receive an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from St. Louis University. In bestowing the degree of Doctor of Laws, the University President, the Very Reverend Paul C. Reinert, S.J., said "To this zealous priest, and to God alone, is it known what personal help he gave to children, the poor and the aged, to seminarians and priests, to religious sisters and their institutions, and to our own university. For these reasons I am honored to present the Rt. Rev. Monsignor John J. Butler, domestic prelate, President of Catholic Charities of St. Louis, for the degree of Doctor of Laws, *Honorius Causa*."¹⁴

Father Shocklee was assigned to be an Assistant to Monsignor Butler in December of 1942, immediately after his Ordination. World War II was going into its second year and young men from St. Leo's parish were serving in the various branches of the military. A Jesuit priest, Father Michael Durso, was a student at the St. Leo's grade school when John was an assistant there. He said that Father Shocklee wrote a newsletter for the servicemen in the parish. Also, as the Assistant Pastor, he was responsible for the children's Mass and for periodic visits to the school classrooms. Father Durso recounted how Father Shocklee occasionally read the comics at Mass to illustrate a point made in the readings for that day. He was popular with the students, according to Father Durso, and from other accounts we know that this was true during his entire tenure as a priest, particularly as a pastor. Although he left St. Leo's in 1958 to become an Assistant at Sacred Heart Parish in Florissant, Missouri, while acting as

the Administrator at St. Thomas Aquinas High School, John always kept some attachment to St. Leo's. In June of 1971, for example, while the pastor at St. Bridge's, he also was the administrator of St. Leo's. St. Leo's had been closed for some years and John reopened it for a special devotion to the Black Madonna. In an article in The St. Louis Review, John said, "I look around St. Leo's and I see a statue of St. Leo with his hand raised stopping the Barbarians, and St. Leo is white. Then I see St. Mary and she is white, and St. Anthony, and he is white. We feel this might be an insult to members of another race, not to see a statue or a picture of their race. We are simply trying to help our people in their devotion to Mary, the mother of us all."¹⁵

In September of 1971, there was the first annual Black Madonna festival at St. Leo's. John thought the day was a huge success. "We were trying to get the feel of this thing this year, and from the response we hope to make it an annual thing – in fact, I think you could say definitely that it will be an annual affair after the enthusiasm shown. When I think of the celebrations in the Italian Community for St. Sebastian, and in the Irish Community with St. Patrick's Day, it seems to me that the Black American Madonna Festival is a natural for the black community. An annual festival could be a thing where blacks and whites, Catholics and non-Catholics, could join together."¹⁶

The second Black Madonna Festival was previewed by the St. Louis Review on September 8, 1972. "The September 17 festival will open at 1:00pm with an ecumenical religious service. Guest speaker will be Bishop Arthur Marshall, Jr., of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Bishop Marshall, a former pastor of the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church in St. Louis, heads the Southern District of the A.M.E. Church.

The painting of the Black Madonna will be blessed by Catholic priests and Protestant ministers, black and white, who serve black congregations in the city."¹⁷ This was in keeping with the ideas expressed by Cardinal Ritter at Vatican II. In 1978, when Cardinal John Joseph Carberry ordered that St. Leo's be razed, John requested that the Cornerstone remain in place to mark where St. Leo's stood, so that people would never forget the wonderful things that took place there. The Cornerstone read," Behold The Tabernacle of God With Men". Unfortunately, it wasn't long before the lot was awash with debris and trash.

Cardinal Ritter was a leader on the question of religious liberty and freedom of conscience and he suggested that the title Church be extended to Protestant denominations. He also led on the question of the Jews being responsible for the death of Christ and insisted that the Council absolve the Jews from all blame in the death of Christ. Cardinal Ritter was a leader in the Church on ecumenism, and John, throughout his life as a priest, followed in Ritter's footsteps.

During this early period as a priest, Father Shocklee's interest, and his active participation, in education was nurtured. In addition to his duties at St. Leo's, he was assigned in the fall of 1943 to teach at De Andreis High School, where he remained until the fall of 1949. His success and enthusiasm for teaching was evident and recognized by Archbishop Ritter, who sent him to Catholic University in Washington, D.C., where he earned a Masters Degree in English in 1950. In the summer prior to graduation, he attended Fordham University in Brooklyn. While attending Fordham, it is possible that he took part in the Race Relations Scholarship established by Fordham University in collaboration with The Catholic Interracial Council of New York and named The Vatterott

Scholarship Program for the Preparation of Executives in the Field of Race Relations. Charles F. Vatterott, Jr, of St. Louis, for whom the program was named, received the "Insignia Medal" from the Catholic Interracial Council of New York for his work in Catholic interracial relations, as well as for his establishing the Scholarship Program.¹⁸ The announcement of the Vatterott Scholarship Program by Fordham University and The Catholic Interracial Council of New York, stated; "The Vatterott Scholarship Program is designed to recruit for the furtherance of work in Interracial Relations young men of the highest intellectual and moral caliber. The goal of this program is the training of competent executives who will be equipped to carry on the work of the various Catholic Interracial Councils throughout the United States. It is hoped that young men who qualify for these awards will enter the work of the Councils if opportunities are available."¹⁹

During that summer, he renewed his friendship with Marylyn Reynolds and her family. Although not related, he often referred to her as his sister, because as a child she spent summers with his family. Their relationship was established by her brother being married to John's sister. Her husband was a barber and decided to establish a shop in St. Louis, where they subsequently moved. John spent vacations with the family in Florida and visited them in St. Louis on a regular basis. Her children referred to him as uncle FAF, a name given to him by Marylyn's young daughter Ann who at the time found it difficult to say father, and is in place of uncle father.

On his return to St. Louis, he became the administrator for DuBourg High School, where he remained until 1955, when he became the founding Administrator for St.

Thomas Aquinas High School. While at St. Thomas Aquinas he also served as an Assistant at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Florissant, Missouri until 1961.

Razing's Over



ONLY THE CORNERSTONE: An inscribed cornerstone was virtually all that remained after St. Leo's Catholic Church at 23rd and Mullanphy streets was razed last fall. (Post-Dispatch Photo by Jim Rackwitz)

2. Becoming Father John

When Father John Shocklee arrived at St. Leo's to work under the direction of Monsignor John Butler, the St. Louis Archdiocese was under the direction of Archbishop John J. Glennon. When Archbishop Glennon, later Cardinal Glennon, was replaced by Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter, he had been the archbishop of the St. Louis diocese for 42 years. "In his 42 years as archbishop, he promoted relations between Catholics and Jews, built more than 100 churches and schools, ordained 4700 priests and grew the St. Louis diocese from a provincial see to such a formidable entity that it warranted his elevation to cardinal."¹ However, he was of a period within the Church that had not yet fully embraced ecumenism as it was later accepted by Church leaders such as Cardinal Joseph E. Ritter, Glennon's successor. When he was approached by local Protestant Ministers to participate in a religious congress that they were proposing for the 1904 World's Fair, Glennon declined to be involved. He stated, "A Catholic Bishop cannot join in any non-Catholic religious service anywhere."² His statement, of course, was *pro forma* at that time.

Despite his many accomplishments, there is the persistent belief that throughout his tenure as Archbishop of the St. Louis diocese he favored segregation of the races and opposed the integration of schools. In response to a request for biographical information on Archbishop Glennon, the Archdiocesan Chancellor, Monsignor John P. Cody, wrote, "I regret that in some Colored publications it was insinuated that Archbishop Glennon was not in favor of the Colored people, but this is a great

misrepresentation of facts as I believe he has done more and given more money to the Colored cause in his Archdiocese than in any another. I give you this information confidentially as I know you may be able to correct this erroneous opinion held by some regarding the Archbishop's interest in the Colored Catholics."³ Cody's statement correctly reflected the attitude of the Church, at that time; i.e., help was provided blacks, but for the most part segregation was accepted as the norm.. Although Archbishop Glennon had made generous personal gifts to Negro parishes and schools, he had never fully sympathized with the view of the Catholic integrationists".⁴ Monsignor Cody's letter refutes the accusation that Glennon failed to support Colored Catholics in their efforts to gain equality within the Church, but there is evidence that Glennon, at the very least, remained unaware of the true nature of the problem. A certain naiveté is apparent from a story told to Sue AnnTrettor by Shocklee in an interview. "The story of Tom Franklin, a black man who worked for Archbishop Glennon, but who could not go into the Cathedral. When Mr. Franklin died and Glennon attended his funeral, he made the mistake of offering to say a few words; 'I hope that when I die and go to heaven Tom Franklin will be my servant again'."⁵ These words were meant to express affection and were not intended to be demeaning to Tom Franklin. In an article in the Everyday Section of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the reporter Florence Shinkle states; "According to the Rev. William Faherty, the respected St. Louis-born historian, the problem with Glennon was that he lived too long. That—and the fact that he was an Irish immigrant for whom belonging to his new country usually translated into conforming to the

mainstream --- kept him from a vision on the racial question."⁶

Evidence of Glennon's poor understanding of racial matters and his ineptitude when faced with problems relating to race is apparent from a series of letters concerning a request from Jane Aileen Kaiser to have her son enter the school in their parish. On November 18, 1944 Mrs. Kaiser wrote a letter to the Rev. Claude H. Heitheus, S.J... Mrs. Kaiser related to him the following about a meeting she had with the Archbishop. "Following this declaration of my purpose, His Excellency was quite incoherent in his statements. He told me that 'Why, yes; we have been more than generous with the negroes – you know there are several Negro Catholic schools here – there's St. – ah-St. – well, there's one downtown, St. Niche-, well, anyway, we had to provide \$300 to help build that school – you see, Negroes don't give the money, and we're always having to furnish money to help them out, since they won't build schools of their own – there are very few Negro Catholics in this city, about 10,000 –now, taxation, taxation provides money for the state – but, then, we can't force you to contribute to the Negro Catholic schools, that will be alright-yes, that's what you do. You see, Negroes don't take care of their things-they should fix up their houses, paint their houses, mow their lawns, put curtains at the windows- you've seen how they live – there's the matter of housing- yes, housing - we would give them more but they don't deserve more- we have been most generous- why we're planning to build a high school for them- over there on Taylor Ave, you know, over there – that will be just for Negroes."⁷

On December 4, 1944, not able to get assistance from the Archbishop, Mrs. Kaiser wrote to the Apostolic Delegate in Washington. "As a Catholic mother,

responsible before God for the Catholic education of my children, I am appealing to you for help in a matter of conscience. This is the only recourse I have left. I have already appealed to my Pastor without avail. The account of my experience with him is enclosed herewith. Next I appealed to my Archbishop only to be rebuffed. An account of my interview with him is also enclosed."⁸

A letter dated December 6, 1944, from the Apostolic Delegate, the Most Reverend A.G.Cicognanni, to Archbishop Glennon, requests that he provide information that would enable Archbishop Cigognanni to respond to Mrs. Kaiser.⁹ Archbishop Glennon responded on December 27, 1944 and again on January 1, 1945. These two very long letters provided a short history of the Archdiocese's relations concerning Black Catholics, as well as a summary of the matter concerning Mrs. Kaiser. He denied any failure to care for black Catholics and explained his view of the problem. "I agreed with this lady in principle that Christ died for all people and that all were equal in the sight of God – that the color of the individual did not destroy his parity. I mentioned that slavery was not introduced into this country by the Catholic Church and this produced, particularly in the Southern States, antagonism between the white and colored people. I related that Missouri being a State that inclined toward the Southern way that there are two different systems of education – one for the white and one for the colored. The State of Missouri, furthermore, prohibits miscegenation, the marriage between whites and blacks."¹⁰

Archbishop Glennon was a man of his times and his understanding of racial problems and his own prejudices was not different from that of most people, including

priests and bishops and the leaders of other religions. Monsignor Shocklee recounted the following story to Sue Ann Tretter. "A priest at the segregated St. Mathew's Parish from the pulpit directed his parishioners not to buy a Sunday paper from the black newsboy who was stationed outside the church. To do business with him would only encourage his kind to cross over the boundaries of the Ville. (A traditionally black neighborhood)."¹¹ This was the time of the KKK, lynching, and legal segregation, and it was a time when an immigrant Irish priest was attempting to reconcile his faith and leadership of his Church with the facts of life in a largely Southern and segregated society. In a letter to the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, on January 1, 1946, Archbishop Glennon stated; "The work for the colored Catholics of the Archdiocese progressed satisfactory until a few years ago when, in accordance with the trend of the times, demands were made for complete equality, the great influx of colored people from the South created a serious problem here for the city and on more than one occasion, serious clashes, even resulting in murder, took place between whites and blacks. Accusations of race discrimination have been hurled without grounds and, I fear, that some of our clergy have fallen victims to a revolutionary trend that is growing alarmingly in cities where there is a large colored population. At all times we have urged prudence and caution, but our advice has not always been heeded."¹²

That the Archbishop struggled with this anomaly, and that he was prodded by the Vatican to provide equally for all Catholics, appears evident from a letter to The Reverend Thomas R. Woods, the Pastor of Saint Thomas of Aquin Church, dated August 11, 1945. "Dear Father Woods, as the Parochial schools will open in the near

future, I beg to advise that you should admit to the Parish School Catholic Colored Children, whether rich or poor, provided, they meet the necessary qualifications as to health, age, training and are fitted for the grade they wish to enter, and that there is no Catholic Colored School within reasonable distance which they could attend.

Ps. This is not to be read publicly.¹³ This was two years before the widely controversial integration of all Catholic schools in the St. Louis Diocese ordered by Archbishop Joseph Ritter.

It is unfortunate that issues relating to racism, urbanism, and the problems of social justice were not part of the training of seminarians. Father S.W.Bauer, a seminary classmate of Msgr. Shocklee, stated, "John and I did discuss the plight of the poor, especially the black population. One of the most disheartening things in our seminary days was that the 'Social Gospel' teaching was almost totally lacking".¹⁴ It is understandable, then, that priests at the time of Archbishop Glennon often reflected the prejudices and racism endemic in the society. However, it is evident that seminarians Shocklee and Bauer were already socially concerned men, and as priests both became involved in matters concerned with race and poverty.

Archbishop John Glennon was called to Rome and created a Cardinal on February 18, 1946. On his returning trip to St. Louis the then Cardinal John Glennon stopped off in Ireland to visit, and died there on March 9, 1946. His body was returned to St. Louis and is buried in the St. Louis Cathedral.

On October 8, 1946, a sea change occurred in the St. Louis Catholic Archdiocese with the appointment of a new Ordinary, Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter. It was widely

believed by St. Louis Catholics that the Vatican appointed Ritter to head the Archdiocese of St. Louis as an antidote to the policies espoused by his predecessor, Cardinal Glennon. Historian, Father William Barnaby Faherty, said, "While Archbishop Ritter always said he was not sent here to integrate the schools, I think that he was chosen because he was more likely to move in this very important area. It was the whole area of racial justice – not just integration of the schools –but the whole question of integration of parishes-- of treating our black Catholics as fellow full Catholics and our black citizens as fellow full citizens. I'm sure that people making those decisions felt it was pretty certain that Archbishop Ritter would move in that direction."¹⁵ It is evident that Ritter, along with Monsignor Butler, played a major part in the formation of the young Father Shocklee. Ritter's positions on race, education, ecumenism, and freedom of conscience, were all reflected in Shocklee's life as a priest.

In contrast to Cardinal Glennon, who was an Irish immigrant living in Missouri, a de jure segregation state, Archbishop Ritter was born, educated, ordained, and lived his entire life in the Mid-west of the United States. Because of his orientation into life in Missouri, Cardinal Glennon did not believe in integration, while Archbishop Ritter was an advocate for integration. In an interview with Father William Barnaby Faherty by Patricia Rice of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Faherty states, "Ritter was an Indiana native and former archbishop in Indianapolis. When he came to St. Louis in 1946, he immediately endorsed the Sisters of Loretto's wish to enroll black women in their all-female Webster College – now Webster University. His predecessor, Cardinal John Glennon, had told the nuns that Missouri law would not allow integration."¹⁶

"Significantly, Archbishop Ritter's first public appearance was at a meeting of the Midwest Catholic Clergy Conference on Negro Welfare at Visitation Church, in the heart of the St. Louis Negro quarter, where Father Malloy was assistant pastor. Knowing the Archbishop's past record – he had integrated the Catholic schools of Indianapolis, and Evansville – Father Malloy and his collaborators could now speak with confidence in outlining what they had done to bring together white and Negro children."¹⁷ A further indication of the path he would have the Diocese take is a chance remark he made to his driver: "When his driver pointed out St. Elizabeth's as a 'black parish', the new archbishop demurred: 'We have only Catholic parishes.'"¹⁸

Born in 1892 in New Albany, Indiana, Ritter demonstrated an interest in becoming a priest at an early age, and after graduating from the eighth grade he entered St. Meinrad's Benedictine Abby where he prepared for the priesthood. He was ordained on May 30, 1917, a little over a month before Shocklee was born, and was assigned as an assistant at St. Patrick's Church in Indianapolis. All of his years in Indianapolis, with the exception of the short period at St. Patrick's, were spent in the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Paul. There he rapidly rose to the position of First Assistant to Bishop Chartrand, and in 1925 he was appointed Pastor of the Cathedral. He became the auxiliary bishop of the diocese in 1933 and the diocesan bishop in 1935. He and Bishop Chartrand "came into violent collision with the Ku Klux Klan, which had its headquarters in Indianapolis".¹⁹ Although often thought to be only a Southern problem, the Klan was very strong in the Mid-West; particularly in Indiana. "In the 1920's the group was against Catholics, Jews, African-Americans, immorality and drinking.

Nationally, Indiana was said to have the most powerful Ku Klux Klan.²⁰ In the early 1920's, the Klan in Indiana was politically powerful and in 1924 was able to elect Edward Jackson as governor of Indiana. However, the Klan lost power and prestige as a result of the conviction in 1925 of the Grand Dragon of the KKK in Indiana, D.C. Stephenson, for the rape and death of a state employee. Convicted of second degree murder, he spent 31 years in the state penitentiary. The moral authority the Klan boasted of having was lost and the Klan discredited. "As archbishop of Indianapolis and later St. Louis, Cardinal Ritter was remembered as a holy and courageous man who faced considerable opposition from the Ku Klux Klan when he desegregated Catholic Schools in both archdioceses."²¹

Even before Cardinal Ritter appeared on the scene, St. Louis was making some progress in improving race relations. For example, in February of 1944, Father Claude J. Heithaus, S. J., a professor at St. Louis University, delivered a sermon before the student body. At one point in the sermon, he said, "Catholic students in whose welfare I have dedicated my life and all that I have, listen to me. St. Louis University admits Protestants and Jews, Mormons and Mohammedans, Buddhists and Brahmins, pagans and atheists, without even looking at their complexions. Do you want us to slam our doors in the face of Catholics, because their complexion happens to be brown or black?"²² Shortly thereafter, the university announced that Negroes would be admitted in the fall of 1945. However, the problem still persisted at the University. In a letter dated September 9, 1947, the School of Dentistry informed the Reverend John Martin that a student he had sent for dental care could not be accommodated, because the

school did not have colored dental students and therefore they do not accept colored dental patients.²³

Ritter's most controversial act occurred shortly after his arrival in St. Louis. He had integrated the Catholic schools as the Archbishop of the Diocese of Indianapolis, and in his first months as Archbishop of St. Louis he observed that racial inequalities existed throughout the Archdiocese. Within his first year as Archbishop of St. Louis he closed St. Joseph's High School for Negroes and issued orders to all parishes that all Catholic schools were to be integrated at the beginning of the fall 1947 school year. Many Catholic laymen and some Catholic clergy were opposed to the integration order, and some believed it was contrary to state law. A group of lay Catholics calling themselves The Catholic Parents Association first appealed to Archbishop Amleto Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States. Their petition was refused and at a meeting of 700 members they threatened to bring legal action against Ritter. "More than 700 white Catholic parents banded together to protest the seating of Negroes next to their children."²⁴ Ritter responded to the threats by issuing a letter on September 20, 1947, which was to be read at all Masses on Sunday, September 21st. "After mature deliberation, and fully confident of the loyalty of the faithful, we now deem it opportune to caution them publicly. By the general law of the Church, there is the serious penalty of excommunication, which can be removed only by the Holy See. This penalty is incurred automatically should an individual or group of individuals, without permission, in violation of Canon 2341, presume (that is, after full knowledge) to interfere in the administrative office of their Bishop by having recourse to any authority outside the

Church.”²⁵

The archdiocese received over 400 letters of approval, many from other states, and only 71 letters objecting to the integration of the schools. Some of the letters came from very influential people from around the country. For example, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote on November 3, 1947; “Mr. Will Alexander of the Julius Rosenwald Fund has written me about the stand you have taken against segregation in the parochial schools of St. Louis. I am always grateful for all such actions as they are a step in the right direction and I congratulate you on your courage and wisdom.”²⁶ Harold Gibbons, President of the Retail, Wholesale & Department Store Union, C.I.O., wrote to express the approval and appreciation of the union.²⁷

Although the integration of the Catholic Schools was successful, there were still the residual problems of racial hatred and racial discrimination. A letter from the Archbishop’s secretary to a parish priest is a case in point. “Yesterday and today a number of complaints reached the office that your acceptance of the colored children into St. Mathews school has been on conditions that nullify the directive of his Excellency: namely attempting to segregate them within the school, segregating them in the use of toilet facilities, segregating them from the ranks of other children, segregating them from opportunities to sing in the choir and implicitly telling them not to go to St. Matthews Church by withdrawing from them the envelopes customarily given your parochial school children.”²⁸ Problems of this sort persisted, but the integration of Catholic schools was largely accomplished.

The reach of Cardinal Ritter extended well beyond St. Louis to the Catholic world in its entirety, and so it could not fail to be a major influence on the life of John Shocklee. Ritter took leadership roles in Vatican II on the issues of ecumenism, freedom of conscience, race, and the use of the vernacular in the Mass. He, along with the Episcopal Bishop Cadigan, authorized the first mixed marriage between a Catholic and non-Catholic in the United States, and he authorized the use of the vernacular in the Mass prior to permission to do so. Ritter was the first Bishop in the United States to send diocesan priests to foreign missions, when he sent three priests to Bolivia. At Vatican II, he was a leader on the question of religious liberty and freedom of conscience. When Catholic University in Washington barred from its student lecture series four eminent Catholic intellectuals, he wrote a letter declaring himself indignant. He suggested the extension of the title Church to Protestant denominations. He was also a leader on the question of the Jews being responsible for the death of Christ and insisted that the Council absolve the Jews from all blame for the death of Christ. Although he had only recently been awarded the title of Cardinal, he had out-shown such American luminaries as Cardinals Cushing and Spellman. "Though Cardinal Ritter was the youngest Prince of the Church from the standpoint of length of time in the cardinalate, Cardinal Ritter was uninhibited by the brilliant theological minds that gathered in Rome from all over the world. He arose in this august body and spoke up boldly and plainly for what he believed right. He gave Rome a new image of the American Cardinal. And long before the Council had finished its work, he was widely recognized as one of the men making contemporary church history."²⁹ And, "Honest, open, devoted to the Gospels, Cardinal Ritter has become in the eyes of the bishops of

the world the most respected of American prelates of his generation, and in the eyes of his people in St. Louis, a pastor in the spirit of Pope John XXIII.³⁰

The accomplishments of Cardinal Ritter are too numerous to pursue here, but in noting that Ritter was the first clergyman to receive the annual Humanities Award by the *Globe-Democrat*, a St. Louis newspaper, David Brown provides an apt insight into how he was viewed by the people of St. Louis. "During a long life that has journeyed from parish priest to Prince of the Church, the Cardinal, who heads the Catholic Archdiocese of St. Louis, has loved and served mankind so well that many of his humane endeavors have far transcended the duties and responsibilities expected even of a high churchman. And they have endeared this friendly, self-effacing prelate to those of all faiths, so that even non-Catholics often speak of him as 'our cardinal.'³¹ One example of why he was so perceived is mentioned in Dream by the River, by William Barnaby Faherty. Ritter had a meeting with four Episcopal leaders, who were requesting that he speak before an Episcopal convention. "In an unprecedented act of mutual esteem the four Episcopal divines asked the cardinal's blessing. He granted their request and then said he would be honored if they gave him their blessing."³² The United Church of Christ Eden Seminary awarded Ritter an honorary doctor of divinity degree and his address to the graduating class is reported as probably the first time a Catholic Bishop spoke at the graduation ceremony of a Protestant seminary. His ecumenism extended to the Jewish community, as well. "Before Vatican II, Cardinal Ritter had instructed Archdiocesan lawyers to enter a friend of the court brief in behalf of Temple Israel, a synagogue which was having difficulty obtaining authorization from the city of Creve Coeur to build at its

chosen site. The case was won and Cardinal Ritter attended the dedication of the synagogue.³³ This, then, is the legacy, which helped to form Father John and many other young priests who lived and worked under Cardinal Ritter's direction.

Education was a driving force in John's life as a priest. After World War II, young priests were sometimes assigned to teach in the diocesan high schools. At an earlier time, the priests at the diocesan schools taught religion, but after Archbishop Ritter they were sometimes assigned to teach academic courses. According to Bill Lally, a former diocesan priest, now married, some of the young priests assigned to teach objected to that kind of assignment, because they felt that that was not why they became priests. Lally had been assigned to teach at DuBourg High School in 1954, and taught there for eleven years.³⁴

John's assignment to teach at De Andreis High School in the fall of 1943 was probably an assignment to teach religion. He was also assigned to St. Leo's Parish as an assistant, at the same time. During his first years at De Andreis, the school was all white, as all public and parochial schools in Missouri were segregated by law. Sometime after Ritter arrived in St. Louis, John was contacted by Monsignor James Curtin, who was then the Superintendent of the Archdiocesan Catholic Schools, who told him that he wanted him in education. John accepted and was assigned to teach English. Coincidentally, the same day Curtin contacted him, he was contacted by Catholic Charities and offered a position with them. He wanted to get into social work but rejected the offer. He had already committed to Monsignor Curtin and would

not go back on his word.³⁵ John continued to teach English at De Andreis until 1949.

Archbishop Ritter had Monsignor Curtin assign some priests to education and had them sent to one or another university to prepare to teach in the Catholic High schools. Catholic education in St. Louis was very extensive, and in 1955, for example, there were 83 parishes with 73 elementary schools, 7 diocesan high schools and 14 private catholic High Schools. In 1949, the Archbishop had John sent to Catholic University in Washington, D.C., to complete work on a Masters Degree in English. He received the M.A. in 1950 and that summer attended Fordham University in Brooklyn, New York. It is not certain what his courses were at Fordham, but it is possible that he took part in the Race Relations courses noted in Chapter One. On his return to St. Louis he became the first Administrator of Bishop DuBourg High School, the building of which was not yet completed.

Floyd Hacker, a teacher with John at the birth of Bishop DuBourg High School and later for many years its principal, said, "at the end of the war there were four Catholic High Schools; St. Joseph's for African Americans, St. Mary's and McBride for boys and Rosati Kain for girls. All of a sudden they started to build a lot of new high schools. In 1950, Mercy, Laboure, and DuBourg were in the planning stage, but because of the over-crowded conditions it was decided to temporarily open DuBourg at Jefferson Barracks. A barracks was renovated, but without cooking facilities or a dining room, so the students were required to carry a lunch and had no hot meals until the new building was completed. The faculty consisted of five teachers, four religious and one lay teacher, Mr. Floyd Hacker. John was the Administrator and a principal was in charge of the academics. The student body consisted of 60 boys and 30 girls, all were

transferred from chosen schools with over-crowded enrolments. Parents and students were almost all opposed to the transfers and were unhappy about the change, but John met with them and turned them around. He convinced them that this would be a good thing for them. Those students still have reunions and are proud to be called the Barracks Brats.³⁶ One of the students attending DuBourg at Jefferson Barracks was an African American and a member of the basketball team. Since this was prior to the 1954 Brown decision and the public facilities civil rights decision, at times the team had problems when playing at the public schools and when playing outside of St. Louis. When playing away games they could not get into restaurants and had to eat carryouts. At one game at a public school the coach of the opposing team would not permit a black player to play, so the team decided that no one would play. On these trips, as well as others, John would drive the school bus and the kids, according to Floyd Hacker, really got a kick out of that.

The students who attended DuBourg at the Jefferson Barracks site and their parents eventually enjoyed the experience, despite the fact that they had greater commuting distances and that the barracks school had no cooking or dining facilities. This was because John had the talent to bring people together and to mediate when there were problems. According to all accounts, John never raised his voice, and it was said of him that "he was an Irish diplomat that could tell you to go to hell in such a way as you will enjoy the trip."³⁷ An example of this is a letter from a former student who objected to his support of the farm workers' boycotts. In the student's closing paragraph, she states, "It seems to most of the laity that true faith and belief in God has been lost

by religious who have worked with the deprived and forget that more than material goods, these people need God, and not social justice, which will follow." Parts of John's response were; "Thank you so much for your kind letter about the problems of the United Farm workers. Although it has been twenty years since I left DuBourg, I am happy that one of its graduates is so interested in social problems.", and, "I am passing over your comments that I am not working for God. When you were just a high school girl I was concerned and working for human rights. The issues then were no more popular than the issues today. But Jesus did not always take the popular side. God and Social Justice are not two different entities. God is Justice and when we lose concern for Justice, we lose God.", and, "Thanks again, Edith, and continue your interest in the problems of the world."¹ When there was conflict among staff members, according to Floyd Hacker, "John would step in and calm the situation".

Monsignor Curtin had promised the original students at Jefferson Barracks that they would graduate from the new building. During Christmas vacation in 1953, the students were advised not to return to school until notified that the new building was ready for occupancy. The school was moved into the new building in January of 1954, but the building was still far from complete.² John was transferred in 1955 to become the founding administrator at St. Thomas Aquinas High school. An extension school for ninth grade students opened in the old Sacred Hearts building in Florissant Valley in 1954. The school had several names, but as plans were underway for building a new facility for a four year high school, it was finally named St. Thomas Aquinas High School. "Early in 1957, a groundbreaking ceremony was held and construction began

on a 141/2 acre site. On June 7, 1958, Joseph Cardinal Ritter laid the cornerstone for the new school, which opened its doors on October 6 of that year. The first principal was Sr. Anne Julia Roddy, a sister of St. Joseph, and the first administrator was the late Msgr. John A. Shocklee.⁴⁰ While the Administrator of St. Thomas Aquinas, John was transferred from St. Leo's to be an Assistant at Sacred Heart Parish in Florissant.

John's interest in education remained with him for his entire life as a priest. He believed that education was a vital part of his pastoral duties, and that "to satisfy a man's needs and dignity is a religious act. However, a part of such help must be to teach that man to stand on his own feet."⁴¹ Often mentioned in connection with John is the statement, Give a man a fish, he'll eat for one day; teach him to fish, he'll feed himself. This became an important part of John's philosophy and formed his approach in working for his parish. "John was an educator and knew how education benefitted the poor. He was looked upon highly because of his appreciation as to how Catholic education affected the life of the poor, and he had an influence on diocesan education."⁴² John explains the philosophy behind "Teach A Man To Fish" in the following statement: "The man who has learned to fish for himself will take on a new and positive pride in himself; not only will he supply for his material needs, he will have learned the more important lesson of fulfilling his capabilities, of developing himself, of adding not only to his own store of knowledge but to his own idea of himself, of his own value."

John's interest and work in education was in no way limited to Catholic education. In presenting John with the Micah Award from the St. Louis Jewish

Community, Rabbi Robert P. Jacobs said, "John Shocklee went everywhere as a constant student, and he became sophisticated in what it takes to bend the system's rigidities and to evoke responses of money and understanding. As he walked the streets and sat in the homes and heard the voices, he learned. And he played with extraordinary grace the game of Know Who, Know What and Know How. And that's how he became the Master Teacher who helped us confront the pain, the misery, the tawdry, the unjust forces of our community. He was trained as an educator whose specialty in administration could have kept him behind a desk. It never did. He was principal of a high school and saw the world through the eyes of young people"

Monsignor Shocklee always supported the Public Schools of St. Louis and he supported and encouraged all Catholics to support the taxes needed for the schools. He was a strong supporter of Judge William Hungate's voluntary desegregation plan for the metropolitan public school districts. When the Human Rights Office got involved in the desegregation of the Public Schools, John got every priest in the city of St. Louis to go to a luncheon in the basement of Saint Francis de Sales Church. The staff of the Human Rights Office wrote a speech for Archbishop May and John got up and said, "We are going to become different, we will not let our schools become racial havens. White kids will not be permitted to transfer from the public schools".⁴³ John spoke in support of the desegregation program before many groups. At a luncheon for the Interdistrict Coordinating Council, John said, "When it comes to education its not how many busses or how you get there, its what's at the end of the ride."⁴⁴

John's influence on the archdiocesan policies affecting education was palpable

and acknowledged. After the 1954 Brown decision, a policy was adopted that prohibited Catholic Schools in St. Louis from accepting any child who was enrolled in Public School, if the school was involved in the desegregation program. Because of the close relationship between the School Office and the Human Rights Office, there can be no doubt that John influenced that policy.⁴⁵ On May 30, 1980, John received a Memo from Archbishop May concerning desegregation efforts. "I have read everything you sent me very carefully and I would agree with your overall analysis and approach. Specifically I agree fully that our credibility will always be at issue until our Catholic schools take the necessary efforts for integration in our own house. Accordingly, I will be happy to work with you and John Leibrecht in this regard." The Human Rights Office got involved in a school board election in 1991, when there were a number of 'White Rights' candidates running for the school board. John led opposition to their election, and the Human Rights Office published leaflets and ran information sessions. At John's urging, Archbishop May took a stand and made it clear that if you were a good Catholic you can't vote for people who are going to polarize the Public Schools along racial lines.⁴⁶

John was not always in agreement with the positions taken by the Church. According to Tom Nolan, there was a time when the Missouri Catholic Conference opposed legislation that was to place public health nurses in the public schools, because the Catholic schools were not included. John was furious and opposed the Catholic Conference position, because he would not support building the Catholic schools up by tearing down the Public schools. In another instance, John wrote to Cardinal Carberry expressing concern that the Church was making St. John and St.

James School more white by removing black children from the parish school.⁴⁷

John not only supported taxes and programs that benefitted public education, he actively participated in public education by serving on committees and commissions of the School Board. He was a member of the School Board's Quality Education Task Force, the sponsor of the Monsignor Shocklee Scholarship program in 1976, to provide higher education to city residents and a proponent for public school desegregation. He was also a member of the Public School Desegregation Committee. In a letter to Archbishop May dated January 7, 1982, he requested the archbishop to write a letter to Judge Hungate requesting an extension for the county school districts to sign on to the desegregation program.⁴⁸ Daniel Schlafly, a close friend and a member of the St. Louis School Board for 28 years, would often alert John when there was something affecting the public schools that needed John's support.⁴⁹

John continued to influence the direction of Catholic Education in St. Louis, with a special concern for the schools in North City and for African American students. In a Memo to Archbishop May, John voiced his concern that the admission policy of Mercy High School would provide limited access to black students from North Side Catholic elementary schools.⁵⁰ He followed that with a memo suggesting that the schools in North St. Louis that are close to one another be consolidated.⁵¹ He was continually looking at ways to benefit the African American students by protesting to the Archdiocese when he perceived policies that negatively affected them, and by

suggesting policies that affected them in a positive way. He is credited with establishing Cardinal Ritter College Preparatory and convincing the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus to provide some staff for the school, which opened in the fall of 1979. "John had talked over the years with people who would have liked to see the Jesuits set-up a school in North St. Louis to serve African American children. John got a lot of people involved in looking at the idea. He spoke to Monsignor Leibrecht, Superintendent of Catholic Schools at the time, and asked that he keep Laboure High School open for one year while the Human Rights Office did a study. They got a lot of people involved, held public meetings, and recommended that they close Laboure, which was an all girls school, and open a new school to serve both boys and girls. The idea was that this would be a different kind of school that would serve boys and girls and be college prep in nature, have its own board of directors, and would have the freedom to set curriculum, tuition, and things of that sort. The proposal was sent to Cardinal Carberry and he approved it. The school opened in September of 1979, it did well and in 2005 it moved into a new building."⁵² "Had it not been for Father Schocklee, there would not be a Cardinal Ritter High School."⁵³ According to Tom Nolan, there are a lot of Catholic Schools in North St. Louis that wouldn't be here if John had not stepped in with some political pull or connection.

John was always willing to provide students with advice, letters of recommendation, and even assistance with tuition. On August 18, 1982, he wrote to Brother Michael Jordan at Christian Brother's College, "Mrs. Shirley Ferguson has a son, Brian, registered as a freshman at CBC. Shirley teaches at St. Engelbert's School.

While we pay everyone according to scale, Shirley still needs money to raise her family. I will do what I can to cover Brian's tuition. I would appreciate any scholarship help you might offer."⁵⁴ The subtle mention of paying everyone according to scale is indicative of John's distain for the wages of Catholic School teachers. He was always supportive of the teachers, and he was worried about the continuing loss of teaching nuns in Catholic schools, particularly Catholic schools in North St. Louis.

It mattered not at all whether the student was from a Catholic school or public school, John was dedicated to the idea that education was the way out of poverty, and he embraced it as indispensable in his quest for justice and as an integral part of being a Pastor. He believed that the Church was of the community and had to work for the best interests of all of the community. Asked by a student archivist from Kenrick/Glennon Seminary what the greatest value of Catholic teaching in social justice was, John answered, "Why education is the answer. There has to be education to the point where they succeed if given the opportunity". In pursuit of education in its broadest sense, John was supportive of adult education. He wrote a memo on February 12, 1982 to the general population, requesting funds in support of an Adult Educational Center located at St. Teresa of Avilla Parish, and in September of that year gave the invocation at the graduation ceremony for the Electrician Joint Apprenticeship and Training program. By far, his most important contribution to adult education was the Volunteer Improvement Program (V.I.P.) designed to provide the means for adults to pursue a High School Diploma through the GED Program (high school equivalency). In the interview with the student archivist, John stated, "We started a program to find out how well they read. We found out that they went to maybe the fourth grade. They were

surprised because they went to the eighth grade somewhere in the South. They participated in the VIP program and many of them went through high school and college"⁵⁵ In fact, the program spread through the city and eventually provided instruction to more than 30,000 individuals and helped over 5000 attain their GEDs. The V.I.P. program started at St. Bridget's in March of 1964 has been a model for similar programs around the country, including Iowa, Illinois and Kansas.

3. Father John

On Saturday, July 4, 1961, Father John Shocklee pulled up in front of the rectory of St. Bridget of Erin Catholic Church, located adjacent to the infamous Pruitt - Igoe housing project, to begin what he referred to as "the happiest years of my life".¹ The back seat of his old car was loaded with everything he owned. While introducing himself to the staff, a parishioner came in and asked if the car parked in the front of the rectory was his, and if it were his he should go to it because someone was stealing its contents. The thieves took everything, including the Chalice he was given by his family at his Ordination. A St. Louis-Globe article at the time indicated the value of stolen goods to be about \$225 in clothing and \$500 cash. John's reported comment was, "I guess they needed it more than I". In an interview with Marylyn Reynolds she said that when his clothes were stolen she asked her friend, Martin Lindenauer, an executive at Famous Barr Department store, if he would open the store so that John could get some clothes. It was Saturday and John needed clothes for Sunday Mass, as he was dressed in casual clothes at the time of the theft. This was his first day as the new Pastor of St. Bridget of Erin Catholic Church.

St. Bridget's is located in what was called Kerry Patch, named by an Irish immigrant group from County Kerry, Ireland. Like early immigrants in cities across the country, these early Irish immigrants occupied slum housing. "They built cheap, one room shacks housing at least one family each. The Irish occupied these under

'squatter's rights', having no title to the land on which they were built."² St. Bridget of Erin Church was erected in 1857, and served the needs of the Irish population. It was built at a cost of \$35,000, on top of four vaulted tombs, which were constructed for the remains of the Cholera epidemic victims of 1849.³ These Irish were not just Irish immigrants; they were Irish Catholic immigrants, used to the authority of the Church through its priests. Such an authoritarian was the Right Reverend William Walsh, who it is said walked the streets on Saturday nights carrying a shillelagh, while exhorting the men to get home to their wives and children. "He could be harsh with fathers who neglected their families. He exerted a strong influence on the community. He had an army of volunteers who conducted guerilla war on poverty in the near north side community."⁴ Father Walsh is credited with building two schools, one for boys and one for girls, and for starting the St. Vincent de Paul Society in St. Louis, which was the first St. Vincent de Paul Society Conference established in the United States.

Following in the footsteps of Father Walsh was a line of Irish priests, several of whom had been St. Bridget parishioners as children. They were Father Edward Fenlon, Father Patrick Dooley, and Father Arthur White, who was John Shocklee's pastor at St. Paul's parish. When he was a boy, John served Father White as an altar boy. Father George Rider followed Father White, and he was pastor from 1932 to 1954, during which time St. Bridget's celebrated its one-hundredth anniversary with a Solemn Pontifical Mass. The Mass was offered by Archbishop Ritter and was attended by

twenty- five priests who were sons of the parish. According to St. Bridget's Anniversary Book, this was the last major Irish celebration at the parish.

When Father Shocklee took over as the pastor of St. Bridget's, the parish and the surrounding area was poor and almost totally African-American. Looming over St. Bridget's was the Pruitt-Igoe public housing complex, called by Alexander von Hoffman of the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University "arguably the most infamous public housing project ever built in the United States".⁵ Without a doubt, Pruitt-Igoe and the surrounding slum housing brought Shocklee to the realization that housing would have to be a major concern for a pastor to the underprivileged people of his parish. However, as important as housing issues would always remain, Father Shocklee embraced all aspects related to justice, including poverty, war and peace, concern for prison reform, fair labor practices, immigration, women's issues, civil rights, ecumenism, and equal educational opportunities. He saw the Church as being of the community, and he viewed his mission to attend to the needs of the people, all of the people, not just those who were Catholic or members of St. Bridget's. Nevertheless, Pruitt-Igoe posed a serious challenge, as it housed a majority of the area's population.

Pruitt-Igoe was designed by Architect Minoru Yamasaki and completed in 1956, and was originally supposed to be a mixture of high- rise and row housing. But, according to Eugene Meehan of the University of Missouri – St. Louis; "In the process of reducing construction costs, conception and execution moved from small and frugal to mean, shoddy, and cheap." And, "The end product was an incipient disaster. Living space was niggardly to the point of being unhealthy. The quality of hardware was so

poor that doorknobs and locks were broken before use, and window panes were blown from inadequate frames by wind pressure.⁶ The project contained 33 eleven story buildings housing over ten thousand individuals, mostly women and children. Elevators stopped only on the first, fourth, seventh, and tenth floors of an eleven-story building, so people had to either walk up or down on stairs that were often occupied by gang members or drug users. The elevators were not equipped to handle large families and constant use. There were no toilet facilities on the bottom floors where mothers congregated with the younger children. When children needed to use the toilets, women living on the upper floors were required to take their children back to their apartments on the elevators. The elevators had the strong stench of urine, as often they would be unable to get them back to their apartment on time. The elevators were often out of order, and even more often without lights, making the trip home, especially for women, dangerous. The stairways and hallways were also often without lighting, providing opportunities for criminal acts.

Pruitt-Igoe was demolished in 1972 and is looked upon as the nation's number one failure in conventional public housing. Many people in the general public view the failure of Pruitt-Igoe as a result of perfidious residents. Most analysts, however, place the blame squarely on society's inability or unwillingness to properly address the problems of the poor. Eugene Meehan stated that "tokenism led directly to the conversion of conventional public housing developments into Indian reservations for the terminally poor and maximally helpless families in society, administered by Indian agents and their tribal accomplices or by local entrepreneurs who saw opportunity in

misery.”⁷ Our society has always been, and still is, reluctant to provide adequate and affordable housing for the poor. An excellent analysis of the problem is provided by Thomas Lee Philpott in THE SLUM and THE GHETTO, Neighborhood Deterioration and Middle Class Reform, Chicago, 1880-1930 “In 1882 the Department of Health reported on the seriousness of housing conditions and appealed to capitalists to build model tenements. The repression-minded Citizens Association responded by appointing a committee on ‘Tenements for Working Classes’. Of course, the committee did not expect the rich men to perform this service for nothing. The committee assumed that most common laborers, if they practiced stringent economy, could afford to pay \$10 a month for housing, but not much more.”

“The committee took the position that accepting a return of less than 6 percent on a tenement was bad business. Yet profits much in excess of 8 percent, when the commodity was shelter for the poor, seemed rapacious. To avoid the perils of philanthropy on the one hand and robbery on the other, the committee set the proper rate of return at 6 to 8 percent. If a tenement could not pay its investors that much, it was not worth building, no matter how badly the poor needed it.”⁸

Although Pruitt-Igoe was built with government financing, the basic philosophy of capitalism’s relationship with the poor remained the same. The federal government failed to provide for the adequate maintenance of the project. The local housing authority could not provide the maintenance from federal allotment and the level of rents tenants paid. Rents were increased beyond what many tenants could pay. Buildings

were in disrepair, vacancy rates continued to increase, and crime became a major problem.

It has been said that Father John was the only person, white or black, male or female, who could walk through the project at any time, day or night, without fear of being molested. An example of the esteem accorded to him is reflected in a story told in an interview with Joe Wiley, an African-American who was very active in Catholic education and was a friend of John's. "There was a lot of unrest around the area during the 1960s, especially around the area of St. Bridget's. There were some blacks there stirring up the people, and they wanted to have a meeting, and they didn't want any white people there. Father Shocklee offered them St. Bridget's for their meeting. Father John was in the rear of the room folding chairs, and one of them asked who the white man in the back was. He was told by another man in the group, 'that's no white man, that's Father John'. 'Oh, then ask him to come up here with us'. That's the way Father Shocklee was – not white – not black- but human, and that's the way people looked on him."⁹ "Evidence of the continuing commitment of the Archdiocese to the cause of human rights has been the work of Monsignor John Shocklee, who has been the voice of the Church in the inner city. He has also been an outspoken defender of the poor, the disenfranchised, and the despairing."¹⁰

Pruit-Igoe was home for more than 10,000 people, more than half of whom were on welfare. Less than one in ten of them were male adults and at the time Missouri Law prohibited women from receiving welfare, if there was a man living on the premises. The

population of 10,000 people is that of a small town and Pruitt-Igoe should have had a St. Louis Police Station on the premises. Its crime rate was high, but contrary to public perception, it was well below that of the surrounding area. Public perception was driven by newspaper reports that referred to any offense committed anywhere in the area as a Pruitt-Igoe crime. The police went to Pruitt-Igoe only in pursuit of an offender, and many vendors, postal workers, and others offering services to the general public refused to service Pruitt-Igoe. Even the firemen threatened to not respond to fires in Pruitt-Igoe unless the city gave them police protection. "The firefighter's union demanded that something be done to stop the harassment and bodily injury to firemen answering alarms in the projects."¹¹ John believed that to build housing for that many people and offer no services was stupid. There were no places for people to gather and there was nothing for kids to do except get into trouble. If the father lived at home, Missouri law prohibited mothers from receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and therefore many fathers lived away from the family. John was very much opposed to such legislation, and felt that it was one cause of crime. "This is the natural result when you drive out strong men. When you remove so much strength from a community, it takes more than the police department to restore the basic structure."¹² He recommended that a group be formed to supervise the activities of the children, which could help provide the male image that was missing. .

During the 1960s, the occupancy rate continued to fall from 80 percent in 1961 to as low as 57 percent in 1969. The high vacancy rate made a perfect haven for all types of criminals – drug dealers, pimps, rapists, burglars, and more. Women going to work or

out in the community for shopping had to do it during daylight hours, and even then there was danger. The public's perception that the residents were responsible was totally without merit, as the crimes were carried out by outsiders using the vacant apartments illegally. Residents attempted to police the buildings themselves, but usually without much success. One example was a building in Pruitt -Igoe which was involved in a block partnership with Holy Redeemer Catholic Church of Webster Groves Missouri. Block partnerships were associations between inner-city neighborhoods and mostly suburban churches. The Chairman of the Human Rights Committee of Holy Redeemer knew Father Shocklee and got the idea of Holy Redeemer's participation with a Pruitt – Igoe building from him. However, other parish members took the lead in the partnership once it started. The partnership had a fence built around the building and locked with locks that took three dimensional keys that only the tenants of the building had. The partnership brightly painted the hallways and installed lighting, put peep holes in the doors to the entrances of all apartments. They developed a surveillance crew for around the clock policing of the building, and they worked to place a light in the yard to enhance surveillance. Although the residents of this building found some safety, they were still prey from criminals on the outside who were living in adjacent buildings. They were still subject to sniper fire and the obvious danger of leaving their protected building to go to work, school, or to go shopping, or to enjoy the barbecue pit and playground that the partnership built. The playground was equipped with two climbers, a volley ball set up and a basketball backboard. Though there was obviously some danger, both the barbecue pits and the playground were used.¹³ A

close relationship developed between the suburban members and those from the building, and there were several family gatherings around the recreation area.

In September of 1970, the St. Louis Housing Authority Board decided to close all buildings in Pruitt and move all remaining residents in Pruitt to apartments in Igoe. The people involved in the block partnership at 2311 Biddle did not wish to move and wanted to stay together to maintain the block partnership with Holy Redeemer Parish. The block partnership, with the help of the Housing Authority director, Thomas Costello, worked to find alternate housing for the families remaining at 2311 Biddle. Ten large families were relocated to an apartment building on Clara Avenue in the West End of the city. Housing for the smaller families was found at other locations in the city. The ten families that moved to the Clara Avenue location continued the block partnership activities with the Holy Redeemer Parish.¹⁴

Crime and the structural demise of the buildings are not the only problems the tenants of Pruitt- Igoe faced. The total infra-structure was flawed. Power failures, flooding within the buildings, and lack of heat made life there less than satisfactory. "Residents of an apartment building in the Pruitt-Igoe development were flooded out yesterday when a water main was opened on the ninth floor. For more than an hour water gushed out of a four inch main at the fire hose station in an entry way, cascaded down stairwells and rushed along galleries and corridors and into apartments. Water was up to three inches deep in 55 of the building's 72 units."¹⁵ Some of this was a result of vandalism; people, probably teen-agers, opening water mains, but in January of 1970

the pipes froze and burst causing considerable damage. St. Louis Mayor Alfonso Cervantes sent the following telegram to Governor Warren Hearns."Urge that you direct State Division of Welfare to take immediate steps to provide emergency relief to families living in Saint Louis who have suffered loss of property due to flooding and power shortages. Your efforts needed to eliminate needless red tape to provide access to relief funds in the next day or two. Normal procedures would be too time consuming to provide relief, which is needed immediately. City Division of Community Services is prepared to work with the State division of Welfare in getting this relief out as soon as possible. An immediate reply would be appreciated."¹⁶ The basement of St. Bridget's parish house was always available for clothes and some food, when an urgent need in either the projects or the neighborhood occurred.

Father Shocklee viewed the problems of housing, whether public housing like Pruitt Igoe or slum housing found around the city, as everyone's problems. He saw the problems of the city as the proper concern of the diocese. In an article in the St. Louis Review he expressed the view that the diocesan obligation was to mobilize the entire community, because the parishes alone could not do the job. Parishes should use all resources available to them, and those resources would include individuals, religious and laity, college groups, and other available organizations anxious to help. "The parish church should consider itself part of the neighborhood, even if the neighborhood is not a committed part of the church."¹⁷ In an article by Olivia Skinner, she quotes John as stating, "The hopeless can only be helped when you have enough neighborhood

leaders to reach them.¹⁸ In order to provide the necessary leadership, John recruited volunteers from a myriad of sources. The American Jewish Congress offered local consultations with doctors, lawyers, architects, and decorators. There were volunteers from the League of Women Voters, several orders of nuns, students from all the local colleges and universities, and men and women from business and industry working with teenagers. Webster College faculty and students were active in day care and with pre-school children. "Some 80 students from Fontbonne, Maryville, St. Louis University and DePaul Hospital meet on Saturdays or Sundays with about 160 little girls from the St. Bridget area. The students befriend from one to three little girls and work with them on simple activities. The basic goal is to establish a continuing friendship, not to teach or preach."¹⁹ Fewer than ten percent of the St. Bridget Parish was Catholic, but Father Shocklee made no distinction between people whether they were Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, or those who had no religious affiliation. John said, "If I just stuck to Catholics, I'd be off in the afternoons playing golf."²⁰ All of these efforts are inclusive, as John's position was "You can't divide people into good guys and bad guys and let it go at that, you have to give them time to change and then try again. He believed that to satisfy a man's needs and dignity is a religious act. However, a part of such help must be to teach that man to stand on his own feet."²¹ A saying attributed to John was "Give a man a fish, he'll eat for one day; teach a man to fish, he'll feed himself". It was this policy of community service and self help that formed the core ideas of Shocklee's programs that were developed around St. Bridget's Parish.

On May 6, 1962, the day that St. Martin de Porres, the first Negro Saint, was canonized, John started an outreach program he called Operation Contact. "There is no one to welcome the migrant Negro", he declared. "No one to assist him to adjust to urban ways. I feel the Catholic Church can assume this role for the Negro."²² Operation Contact was designed to take on this responsibility, as well as to acquaint the community about the Catholic Church. John contacted orders of nuns for assistance. His goal was to have 80 nuns, during the summer months, spend each Saturday in the parish visiting the homes of the residents of Pruitt-Igoe and the surrounding neighborhood. The orders of nuns were the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, the Sisters of Mercy of the Union, the Society of Helpers of the Holy Souls, and the Sister of the Most Blessed Sacrament. The purpose of the visits was not to proselytize or convert, nor were the sisters doing social work. They were visiting to welcome the people and families to the community and to the parish, and to let them know that they would be welcome to attend the church. They also let them know that their children could attend the parish school, even if the parents were not Catholic. As alluded to earlier, John sensed that education was so important that the Church should support it in every way that opportunities were made available to assist in providing it for the poor.

The success of the program is reflected in a letter to Cardinal Ritter, a year end report on parish progress.

"I would like to keep you informed about the progress of our crash program here, which we call Contact-St. Bridget. We are averaging 80

sisters each Saturday, who visit about 350 families on cases the sisters felt would be advisable. Father Marshall and I have the part-time help of 3 Kenrick seminarians, who are doing a fine job. If you ever felt the need of ordaining deacons at the end of the third year theology, and then sending them into parish work for the summer, I would be delighted to have 4 of these young men with us. The seminarians are 'fathers' so far as the people are concerned, and they go right into the projects with the priests. I'm sure this work will mature them and make them better prepared for parish work after their ordination. As a result of the joint work of the sisters and priests, we now have 38 adults under instruction that we did not know about. We have baptized 4 elderly people in their homes. The priests, sisters, and lay catechists gave them instructions. I confess we didn't instruct them on transubstantiation, and we might have been somewhat lax on the Moratorium Fragments, but they did want to become Catholic. One 84 year old blind man died 2 days after Baptism.

The superiors of the religious communities of sisters wish us to continue the program for the benefit of their younger novices and postulants. They feel that this work benefits the sisters by giving them a sensitivity to the needs of the people they serve"²³

Ever the teacher and educator, John sells the value of his program by pointing to the educational benefits accruing to the participants. He was always ahead of the Church on matters related to education and to reaching out to all people regardless of

their religion. In offering help, he never inquired as to religious belief, and help was offered to those who needed it. A good example is the parish school, where half of the students were not Catholic and most of their families attended no church. Ecumenism was just basic to his belief that Christ embraced all people and all life. We will see that this was true of many other things, as well.

In December of 1962, Cardinal Ritter assigned John to be the administrator of St. Leo's Parish, in addition to his duties as the Pastor of St. Bridget's. In a letter dated January 15, 1963 to Sister Mary Rose, D.C., the Superior of Marillac Seminary, he requested her assistance to develop a program similar to, but different from, that of St. Bridget's. "The Cardinal has asked me to try a new approach to the problem of inviting the Negro and all non-Catholics into the Church. We are to use St. Leo's as an instruction center, open to everyone, children and adult alike, hoping to teach them at least basic morality, and possibly interesting them in the Church. An office is being set up with all the teaching materials, audio-visual, pamphlets, books, chalk boards, etc. We priests are to bring in children from the public schools for some kind of Bible instruction. Again, I come to you for help. I would like to ask the sisters to visit the homes in St. Leo's just as they did at St. Bridget's, get to know the people, and if the sisters so desired bring small groups of children into the center for instruction.²⁴

Sister Rose left for a trip to Rome for the beatification of Mother Seton, but on her return to St. Louis she replied to John's request in the affirmative. The Daughters of Charity continued to work with John at St. Bridget's and St. Leo's. In a letter thanking Sister Rose for her continued assistance, John presents two statements that reflect his philosophy: "I have been thinking of the most effective use the sisters might have in the area. Previously they worked in the summer program with the children. This year we have such confusion because of the War on Poverty Program, Operation Head Start etc. that we feel the children may be helped this year by them. I would like to have the good Daughters of Charity out on the street, working with our families who need the most help. The purpose would be to strengthen the family in every way possible, including religious values, employment, homemaking etc. I do not think that each sister must be a graduate social worker, although that certainly would be to her advantage. I believe the traditions of the Daughters of Charity, and whatever help the Sisters at Providence could give would be sufficient. I feel we can do a great deal of good with our people. I like the idea of the visible church, sisters and priests out on the streets. I feel this does much good for our poor people."²⁵ John's concerns for family values and his idea of the "visible Church" helped form his approach to working with the poor.

It is not too far fetched to say that President Johnson's War On Poverty embraced many of the ideas originated by John in his work at St. Bridget's and the area surrounding Pruitt-Igoe. In 1964, Father John Shocklee and his assistant, Father Joseph Kohler, devised what was to become a major effort for the rehabilitation of the near North Side of St. Louis. "Father Shocklee and his small army of volunteers are conducting a guerrilla war on poverty in the near north-side community. The approach is

practical, prudent and on a person-to-person basis. Father Shocklee is the catalyst in a series of human improvement programs – all of them bringing together middle-class people who want to help and poorer people who want to better themselves. Both are expected to profit from the encounter. There are no soup kitchens, no direct charities and no missionary appeals (individuals are not asked about their religion).²⁶ It began with the creation of the Bicentennial Civic Improvement Corporation. Under the auspices of the Bicentennial Corporation (BCIC), an umbrella organization created by John with the help of his many friends and advisors, 21 anti-poverty programs were developed. The programs embraced assistance in arranging loans for the purchase of housing and assistance in rehabilitation of houses either vacant or in disrepair; assistance in finding employment; the VIP program which was adult education to prepare people to take and pass the high school equivalence examination; pre-school program for children of the area staffed by Sisters of Loretto and students from Webster College, who moved into the neighborhood and established the school using the Montessori Technique. There were the Big Brothers and Big Sisters programs to work with older children and help them with both social and educational skills. A guest house was established, described as a neighborhood Pub where people and their friends could meet and exchange ideas. There were Block Units, which were independent organizations affiliated with the Urban League to work on neighborhood problems. Maryville College sponsored a citizens Training program that met in the Branch Library in Pruitt Igoe and brought guest speakers to discuss problems and suggest solutions. There was also the Leadership Training Program described in the program outline as a program “To develop a core of local leaders for effective community action and

development in the Bicentennial Corporation through working together with neighbors, learning together and doing together". The scope of the effort was truly awesome, with each part having a manager and volunteer staff. BCIC had a director and board of directors consisting of 20 business leaders. Each of the community programs had a manager. The programs were Housing Rehabilitation, Employment, The Volunteer Improvement Program, the Credit Union, Homemaker Services, Leadership, Pre-school, Tutoring, Operation Housekeeping, Organized Group Buying, Bus to Market, Rummage Sale, Meals On Wheels, Architectural Association, Neighborhood Youth Program, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Teenage Clubs, House Party, Newspaper, and Printing. All were under the BCIC umbrella. Although all the programs were interrelated, the housing effort, along with the credit union, were a major force and of major importance.

In the Housing Act of 1966, Congresswoman Leonora Sullivan sponsored section 221(h), and in 1968 proposed to expand section 221(h) from \$20,000,000 to \$50,000,000. In her remarks she states, "Mr. speaker, I am today introducing a bill to expand and improve Section 221(h) of the National Housing Act, a section which I was able to have incorporated into the Housing Act of 1966 to enable non-profit organizations to rehabilitate good but deteriorated housing for sale to low-income families under insured mortgages bearing only 3 percent interest. This program grew out of a highly successful experiment in homeownership for low income families initiated in St. Louis several years ago by a group of businessmen, civic leaders, and clergymen who formed the Bicentennial Civic Improvement Corp., purchased some old homes and rehabilitated them, and carefully selected the families which would occupy and own the dwellings and

would cooperate with their neighbors in upgrading the entire neighborhood.”²⁷ “Representative Leonora Sullivan, in a speech before Congress, named Father John Shocklee and Father Joseph Kohler as deserving chief credit for the program.”²⁸ This is just one example of John Shocklee’s reach, which extended out of St. Louis to the nation, and later even beyond national boundaries.

Although housing was of major importance and BCIC obviously influenced national housing policy, other programs within the BCIC organization were also influential. As mentioned earlier, perhaps even often, John was foremost an educator and was certain that an education was necessary for moving out of poverty. In a taped interview with student archivist Max Kaiser, John was asked; “What is the greatest value of the Catholic Teaching in social justice”? “Education is the answer. There has to be education to the point where they can succeed if given the opportunity.”²⁹ John was completely committed to the value of education. “We started a reading program to find out how well they read. We found out that they went to maybe the fourth grade level. They were surprised, because they went to eighth grade somewhere in the South. They participated in the VIP program, and many went on through high school and college. I never kept count.”³⁰

According to Father Joseph Kohler, The Volunteer Improvement Program (VIP) , conceived and organized by John in 1964, was education for adults and another way Bicentennial attacked poverty. The program was staffed by volunteers and was free to all who wished to enroll, regardless of religious affiliation or with no religious affiliation.

The program was established to prepare students to pass the Missouri High School Equivalency test, and emphasized English and Mathematics, but went beyond that and provided for students who were basically illiterate as well. Thousands of students passed through the program and hundreds of volunteers were there to teach. Asked why hundreds of St. Louis people have flocked to assist Father Shocklee, Mother Patricia Barrett, R.S.C.J., of Maryville College, said, "He's fascinated with new ideas and ways of doing things. He has no cut and dried procedures. He'll listen intently to someone with a new approach and suddenly he'll say, 'That's wonderful, you do it.'³¹ Mother Barratt taught a leadership course and later taught in the VIP Program. The tutors in the program came from all walks of life, some were educators like Mother Barratt, many were from religious orders, but there also were lawyers, engineers, business executives, and just ordinary workers who participated. That the program met some important needs of the people is apparent by the success of some of the former students. At least one went on to become a lawyer, and many went on to graduate from high school and college. The VIP program was not only found at St. Bridget's, but was soon embraced by parishes and others in both St. Louis City and St. Louis County, and was the model for programs in several other states such as Iowa, Illinois, and Kansas. It is another example of the influence John Shocklee exerted far beyond the confines of St. Louis and St. Bridget's Parish.

The continued emphasis on education is apparent by the development of the Sophia Study Hall program that provided a place for high school students to study and receive help with home work and tutoring. Directed by a Jesuit seminarian at St. Louis

University, Dennis O'Brien, the program was supervised by students from Webster College and Washington and St. Louis Universities. Students often were unable to receive help at home, because their parents were not well educated and were not equipped to help. Also, often the father was either unemployed or absent and the resources for learning were just not available. Father Shocklee said, "Most of the kids think that this means Sophia Loren, and that's alright with me. Actually it's the Greek word for wisdom. The high school kids around here kept complaining that they had no place to study. If they couldn't study, they had no chance for college. They are handicapped by lack of experience, travel, reading, and family background." The Sophia program provided the help to prepare for college these students could not get from their families.

"Fighting poverty means building people's self-esteem", John told the St. Louis University Faculty Women's Club.³² For John, a major way to build self-esteem is through education. Keeping families together and fostering education worked together. He told the women that they could help by working for legislation to repeal the clause in Missouri Law on Aide to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) which prohibits unemployed able bodied men from living with their families if their wives or children received state aide through AFDC. He believed that the Church had the responsibility to recognize people's needs and use its resources to provide needed assistance. But John felt that although parishes and individual priests should be innovative, like the

Bicentennial Civic Improvement Corporation project, for example, they should remain innovators only temporarily, or until professionals could take over.³³

In April of 1965, Alfonso J. Cervantes became Mayor of St. Louis. He was first elected to public office in 1949, when he became the Alderman for the 15th Ward. During his tenure as an alderman and later as Mayor, Cervantes established a record in the field of race relations, and was given some credit for maintaining good relations with the African American community and keeping St. Louis free of racial riots during the turbulent sixties. Father Shocklee was among the leaders in the field of race relations to whom Cervantes turned for advice.

In October of 1965, during his first term as Mayor, Cervantes appointed Father Shocklee to a four year term on the St. Louis Housing Authority. John was unusually qualified, both because of his knowledge of housing and because his close proximity to Pruitt-Igoe, as the Pastor of St. Bridget's Catholic Church, provided intimate knowledge of the housing problems faced by African Americans. As indicated earlier, he was very much involved with the problems that African-American residents of Pruitt-Igoe faced every day. For an article that appeared in the St. Louis Review, the diocesan newspaper, he stated, "The Negro is in the paradoxical position of being an immigrant in his own country." He went on to say that "the time has come now to stand up and be counted as true Catholics, where the problem of racial bias and bigotry is concerned." He never failed to push Catholic people and the Church to support fair housing and fair employment practices and legislation. He was of the opinion that many affluent people, particularly Catholic affluent people, were spiritually poor, because they failed to meet

their responsibilities to those who were materially poor. For John, they were poor in spirit. Father Shocklee has a parish with a population of some 25,000 Negroes, concentrated in a ten block area – the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Development.³⁴ John was quoted as stating that the task of rebuilding the city is the proper concern of the diocese. It has the responsibility of proposing and supporting equal job opportunity, fair employment practices, and fair housing legislation.³⁵ He was often referred to as the priest of Pruitt-Igoe, and he was certainly involved with the tenants and their problems. For example, John recognized that the poor, among whom were the African-Americans residing in Pruitt-Igoe, paid more for food than people did in the wealthier sections of the city and county. John appeared before a congressional sub-committee meeting in November of 1967 and proposed that government subsidies should be provided to induce more supermarkets in low-income neighborhoods. He noted that the residents of Pruitt-Igoe had little choice in buying groceries, because there was only one supermarket within walking distance of the project. Since they do not have automobiles and public transportation was less than satisfactory, they were required to get their groceries from only one source. "The competition is just not there", he said. He said that the people have no choice. There are small groceries in the area, but they cannot offer the low prices or much selection because of their limited business volume. John suggested that government aid, in the form of grants or tax exemptions, be offered to encourage food chains to keep supermarkets in slum areas and put in more of them. He said that the question of food for the poor was as basic as health and education which

receive government assistance. Most of the residents of Pruitt-Igoe are dependent on welfare benefits, and Missouri ranks forty-second among states.³⁶

As a member of the St. Louis Housing Authority Board John proposed, in October of 1968, that the board be expanded to include tenants of public housing, and that they should be a majority of the board. This was the first time a member of the board had taken a stand for tenant representation and tenant control. "The people who control public housing come from the outside. It is time that some control came from the inside", he said. He is quoted in an article from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch as saying that his recommendation did not reflect dissatisfaction with the present policies or leadership of the Housing Authority, and that the leaders of the Housing Authority have been sympathetic. "But it's a question of doing something for people that we should let them do for themselves. The poor – particularly the Negro poor – are not wanted in certain parts of St. Louis. The people in the county don't want them. The people in south St. Louis don't want them. The people on Euclid Avenue apparently don't want them. Many of them have only one place to go and that's public housing. Well, if the Negro has had three hundred years to learn his place, maybe it's time we learned ours. We should come down here to support them – not to dictate and direct." He went on to say, "The people in Pruitt-Igoe can't choose their police. They can't choose their judges. They're completely powerless in many respects. They should at least have some say in how public housing is run."³⁷

Tenants, who supported John's idea of tenant representation on the board, commented that the idea had been suggested before. In fact, John suggested it previously. In an article about an aldermanic committee meeting investigating public housing problems, John testified that legislation had made Pruitt-Igoe an ideal place for crime, because a man with a decent income cannot live there and the families with children receiving ADC cannot have a man on the premises. He spoke of numerous other problems, and he suggested that a reevaluation of the rent schedule and ADC be made, and that there should be a committee established, made up of residents, social workers and others interested in public housing, to act as liaison between project and the Board of Alderman.³⁸

John was always strongly supportive of the tenants, even when they were protesting against the Church. ACTION, a St. Louis civil rights organization, demonstrated against the Catholic archdiocese in July of 1969. They greeted people leaving the noon Mass at the Cathedral with a manifesto accusing the Church of owning slum property. One of the parishioners, in an interview with a reporter, charged that the demonstrators were trying to start a race riot. John remembered the demonstration at the cathedral as an effective tactical move. He noted that it called attention to housing conditions in the city in ways that previous efforts had failed to do. "Sometimes you have to shock people into realizing that change is necessary." As to the charges of fomenting a race riot and trying to divide and conquer, John observed that the demonstrators "were more patriotic than the people who were benefitting from the

system, because they saw the weaknesses of it and were trying to make it perfect."³⁹ Interestingly, these same demonstrations called for Father Shocklee and other white board members to resign and be replaced by tenant representatives. His term on the board would end in October of 1969, and he served until that time.

During his final year on the board, the situation in public housing became untenable, and conflict continued between the Housing Authority and the tenants. In October of 1968 a public housing election was held and was nullified by the housing authority board. The decision came after six weeks of meetings between the commissioners and the Tenant Affairs Board (TAB). The commissioners had dodged the question of the election for weeks, but came to a decision after a week-end retreat at an undisclosed spot in St. Louis County. Monsignor Shocklee voted against the election because the voter turnout was so low. "You could hardly say a handful of votes represented the tenants," he said.⁴⁰

The festering anger of the tenants finally came to a head in February of 1969 with a city wide rent strike. Pruitt-Igoe, however, did not join the rent strike until April of 1969. The reasons for the protest varied from poor living conditions to law and order, and as one tenant put it, "no police, no telegrams, no fire protection, and no postmen."⁴¹

The Housing Authority and the City retaliated by filing a suit to attach the accounts of the strikers. Congressman William Clay, in a letter to Mayor Cervantes dated April 25,

1969, recommended that the attachment suits be withdrawn, that there be a moratorium on all law suits and evictions, and that there be a reduction in the high rents.⁴²

What really got the strike started though, beyond the lack of services and the obvious poor condition of the buildings, was the rent increase of November, 1968. The Urban Development Act of 1968 required local housing authorities to provide tenants with adequate services and lower rent. But neither the federal government nor the State of Missouri provided the local authorities with the funds necessary to carry out the mandate of the legislation. "The tenants were literally forced to look to their own resources. Aided and even prompted by local ministers, the Legal Aid society, and the more ephemeral good wishes of the newly formed National Tenants Organization, the tenants prepared to strike."⁴³ Tenants were urged to withhold their rents and pay them to their Advisory Councils to be held in escrow until strike settlement. A partial list of the Pruitt-Igoe strike demands submitted by the Pruitt-Igoe Neighborhood Advisory Council on August 3, 1969 included maintenance requirements (for example, the construction of ground floor toilets to help eliminate urinating on elevators and extermination programs to control the problem of rats and roaches), the establishment of rent not to exceed 20% of the income of tenants on fixed incomes, police protection, and the appointment by the Mayor of three tenants to the Housing Board. As part of the strike settlement, the Tenants Advisory Board (TAB) was officially to work with the housing authority on all matters pertaining to tenants.

The rent strike finally ended in October of 1969. The strike was effective in that it made not just the city of St. Louis, but the entire country aware of the problems faced by people living in public housing. Pruitt-Igoe in particular was pointed to as an example of the problems people faced.

John's interest in housing was not confined to public housing. He saw that discrimination in housing impacted educational opportunities, employment opportunities, as well as the social well being of poor people, particularly black poor people. He actively participated as a member of housing advocacy organizations, but his major contributions stemmed from his influential position in the community and his ability to use his influence effectively. In addition to his membership on the St. Louis City Housing Authority Board, he was a member of the Freedom of Residence Board of Directors, a member of The Missouri Coalition for Housing Board of Directors, a member of the Housing Information Center, and he was a member of both the St. Louis Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), both of which were highly involved in opposing housing discrimination. In addition, he supported the efforts of many other organizations working for housing opportunities for low and moderate income people and for minorities, such as: the Salvation Army, Saint Louis Association of Community Organizations (SLACO), Metro Housing Resources, the St. Louis Tenant Association, the Near Northside Team Ministry, Youth, Education, and Health in Soulard (YEHS), and the St. Louis Human Development Corporation.

In an article in the December 10, 1971 St. Louis Review, John explained the kinds of justice he was concerned about. "There's legal justice – improving jail treatment and prison systems. For example, right now in the U.S., there are 400,000

persons in jail, and yet 52 per cent of them have not yet had their trials. That means that 200,000 untried persons are in jail. Justice means a concern for housing for the poor, and that brings us to problems like Black Jack, like Catalan St., like 4600 S. Broadway. Residents say they don't want housing projects for the poor, but then where are the poor to live?⁴⁴

John was not just interested in the provision of houses for the poor; his interest extended to the treatment of tenants and the fairness of tenant/ landlord relations. A letter to The Honorable William O'Toole, dated January 18, 1978, relates of his concern for the welfare of tenants.

Dear Representative O'Toole:

I am very interested in HB 1131, the Missouri Residential Landlord Tenant Act, which has been assigned to the Judiciary Committee.

As you are no doubt aware, Missouri statutes presently do not deal with many of the problems encountered daily by both landlord and tenants. For example, the rights and duties of both parties with regard to maintenance of rental units, regulation of security deposits and payments of utility bills are scarcely mentioned in the present law.

While I am sure the Judiciary Committee has many major pieces of legislation to work on, I would ask you to schedule hearings on HB 1131 before the end of January so that this important measure can be considered by the full House during this session of the General Assembly.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. I will appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible as to what action has been taken.

Sincerely yours,

Reverend Monsignor John A. Shocklee

In another letter dated January 18, 1979, he requested that Representative O'Toole support HB572, the Landlord/Tenant legislation. This legislation established rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants with regard to security deposits and the maintenance of property. It proposed to protect tenants from retaliatory actions and allow tenants to pay utility bills from their rent money, if the landlord fails to do so.

In addition to his support for Landlord /Tenant legislation, as a member of the Board of Directors of The Missouri Coalition for Housing, John supported their legislative agenda, which included bills to prohibit redlining by banks and savings and loans associations; to license and regulate the practices of mortgage bankers and to require that adequate benefits are paid to persons who are forced to move by actions of state agencies or private developers. The Missouri Coalition for Housing was also an organization receiving funding from the Campaign for Human Development.

Support by John for some of the organizations that were not main stream or status quo was not always met with favor by some Catholics and by some Catholic priests. As the Director of the Human Rights Office John was responsible for funding that was provided by the Campaign For Human Development (CHD), with the approval of the archbishop and commissioners. One organization that received funding from CHD several times was Freedom of Residence. At one time John was on the

board of directors of Freedom of Residence. John supported Fair Housing initiatives, but opposed efforts toward racial balance. He stated, "We favor the right of everyone to live where he chooses to, but we oppose efforts at steering and exploitation". Freedom of Residence was an advocate for low-income and minority families, and actively opposed redevelopment and eminent domain actions that caused displacement. They also investigated steering activities and other racial discrimination in housing.

Starting in 1976, and continuing through the 1980s, Freedom of Residence (FOR) was embroiled in a struggle with the families in the Tiffany, Terry Park, Compton and Grand neighborhoods of St. Louis. John was made a member of the Freedom of Residence board of directors in May of 1963, and was a strong supporter of FOR during this entire period. The Mid-town Medical Center Redevelopment Corporation (MMCR) was formed in 1976 by St. Louis University and several St. Louis Banks. The Tiffany neighborhood was located directly behind the St. Louis University Medical School and the Terry Park, Compton and Grand Neighborhoods were all located within the immediate vicinity. John was very concerned about the complaints of residents regarding displacement and relocation occurring in the area, with very little relocation assistance. The city granted MMCR the power of eminent domain, which permitted the acquisition of properties through condemnation. The contention of the Executive Director of MMCR, John Abramson, was that the redevelopment efforts would bring about stability and a thriving integrated community. The area at the time of the redevelopment efforts was about 78 percent black, and, according to Abramson, contained a large number of abandoned and sub-standard units. The medical school

and the St. Louis University hospital were concerned that if deterioration were to continue, they would lose prospective medical students and hospital patients.

The redevelopment corporation had the power to determine if a property met the standards established by the corporation. The home owners and the staff of FOR, believed that the standards were arbitrary and beyond the ability of many of the residents to make the necessary improvements. The redevelopment effort was to provide housing from a lower economic group to a higher economic group. This is called filtering, and traditionally was a succession of housing stock downward from occupancy of a higher economic group to one of a lower economic group. The MMCR redevelopment was turning the process of succession upside down. In St. Louis, the redevelopment process is a full partnership between the private developer and the city government, whereby the city provides all physical improvements to the area, while the developer either builds new units or rehabilitates existing units. The development plan for MMCR was approved by the Board of Aldermen on June 13, 1978, and called for the rehabilitation of 900 dwelling units and the construction of an additional 400 to 500 units. The plan indicated that a total of 225 households were to be relocated over a period of nine years. Some residents disputed the extent of the proposed displacement , claiming it would be much greater. By December of 1983, according to the New York Times, "53 families, nearly all of them black, were forced to move out". The situation was beginning to be a black eye for St. Louis University and the Catholic Church. "Father Paul Reinert, chancellor of St. Louis University, said it was time for Midtown's directors to try to resolve the problem and rethink the original goals. The chief question, Father Reinert said, is can you bring together a sufficient number of families and

individuals that are racially integrated and also have the financial means to pay for the cost of rehabilitation today?"⁴⁵ Father Reinert's position and that of the people in the neighborhood subject to displacement by the redevelopment corporation was categorically opposed. FOR, and therefore Monsignor Shocklee, was demonstrating with the neighborhood in opposition to MMCR.

This is just one example of John holding positions and acting contrary to the Church, or in this case, to a Catholic University's efforts to gentrify the area around it. And, although John had many friends, not all Catholics approved of his social positions or those of the Human Rights Commission. Commenting on the funding by the Campaign for Human Development's funding of FOR and several other Fair Housing Organizations, an unidentified source wrote: "This organization is made up of subversive and totally unproductive individuals. They foster irresponsibility and false hopes among people who should be encouraged to better themselves. They unfairly exploit property owners. The philosophy is completely counter to the rights of private property. My experience with this group goes back for over 13 years. The lawsuits they wish to pursue are simply of a nuisance nature, and are an affront to the hard working Catholics that financially support this campaign."

In a testimonial dinner honoring John, a parishioner of St. Genevieve du Bois, a St. Louis County parish where John was once the Pastor, spoke of how he and other conservative members of the parish were gravely concerned when they heard that John was to be assigned as pastor of St. Genevieve. He spoke of having written letters over the years opposing positions John had held, and he had objected to his being made

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Pastor. But then he said "But I came to know and respect this man, and while he doesn't always agree with me, nor I with him, he listens and hears what you are saying, and I am today a better man for having known him." He went on to say, "If anyone five years ago would have predicted that I would be on a program praising Monsignor Shocklee, he would have been called crazy."

Rabbi Stiffman, a friend and colleague with whom John worked on mutual concerns, asked John, when he was being transferred to St. Genevieve du Bois, if he thought the people of such a rich parish were his type. John answered, "Everybody is my type of people". Rabbi Stiffman said of John, "John never strayed from being a Catholic. He was a good Catholic; he was a priest. But when the Church wasn't moving as fast as he thought they should, he gave them a push. John was not afraid to say what he thought needed to be said, and he would say to Archbishop May, we should do this or that, and May would smile and often follow through."⁴⁶

John's final assignment was as Pastor of St. Liborius on the North side of St. Louis. In many ways he viewed it as a coming home after serving for five years at St. Genevieve du Bois, a wealthy parish in St. Louis County. Except for that relatively short period, he had spent his life as a priest in poor parishes on the North side of the city. He felt an affinity with St. Liborius, as he had shown an interest in the parish while a pastor at St. Genevieve, where he helped parishioners establish a food pantry at St. Liborius. John viewed his assignment as helping people and building the community for those people living there. He wanted to help get more housing for low income people, and to work for social justice. His interest in housing was not the same as some of the

parishioners, whose interests were those of preservationists. "Before Shocklee came, some parishioners -- - many of whom live outside the parish boundaries – had hoped St. Liborius might one day be the focal point of a thriving, restored neighborhood. Now, some former parishioners have quit attending the church." As one parishioner stated, "I resent Catholic priests getting up and telling people what to do with their life and property." Another parishioner, a lifelong resident of the North Side, complained that Shocklee wanted to create soup kitchens and public housing developments. He supported a business park that had been proposed and wanted more housing for middle income residents. He said that residents want progress, health and growth.⁴⁷

John's interest in the provision of housing for low and moderate income people and for organizations that shared those goals never wavered. Several organizations benefitted greatly from Monsignor Shocklee's advice and support. Among them were St. Louis Association of Community Organizations (SLACO), Metro Housing Resources (MHR), and Youth, Education and Health in Soulard (YEHS). John had no direct involvement in the operations of these organizations, but he provided assistance, both financial and advisory, whenever requested or when he saw a need. For example, when YEHS was founded in 1972, and it worked in conjunction with the Soulard Neighborhood Improvement Association (SNIA), which was founded in 1969 and was concerned with stopping demolition, fighting crime, and getting youth programs started with federal funds available through the Human Development Corporation (HDC). A group called the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) thought that Soulard needed a free breakfast program, similar to one the Black Panthers had started. Studies

had shown that children did better at school if they had breakfast this program would be part of the effort to reduce high school drop-out rate. YEHS became its sponsor in 1972, but they needed a facility for offices and space and a place to run their programs. A convent and school, which were owned by St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church located in Soulard, were vacant. YEHS asked the Pastor of St. Peter and Paul several times if they could have use of them. He refused to permit them to use the facilities. Knowing Father Shocklee , who was still the Pastor of St. Bridget but was also the Director of the Human Rights Office and the Coordinator of the Inner City Apostolate, they went to St. Bridget to see if he could help. He talked with the Pastor of St. Peter and Paul and was able to convince him of the importance of the work of YEHS. His assistance facilitated the launching of a free breakfast program, senior citizens meals and social group activities, work-study and youth employment for teen-agers, arts and crafts, cooking and tutoring classes, movies, a girls club and big brother program, a free library, a food stamp sign-up for families, and a neighborhood newspaper. All three stories plus the basement of the convent were filled with these activities from morning until night.⁴⁸ Over the years after that first help, Monsignor Shocklee was a friend and a supporter of YEHS.

SLACO also received John's attention, although he had no direct position with the organization. SLACO is a coalition of neighborhood associations and churches, and provides staffing assistance to eleven neighborhood associations. It fosters community based initiatives, including housing development, commercial development, crime

prevention, leadership training, citizen empowerment, and neighborhood organizing.⁴⁹

Father Gerry Kleba stated that John supported SLACO by providing encouragement, helped SLACO get funding, and helped them know people who could help and advise them about community organizing. He also defended them. The following letter to the Mayor of St. Louis provides insights into John's standing up to powerful people, when necessary. It is also indicative of his connections with the most prestigious business leaders in St. Louis, and the obvious influence he commanded.

Dear Vince,

I am disturbed with your comments about SLACO as reported in last Monday's St. Louis Globe Democrat. Your comments (if properly quoted) were negative, inaccurate and frivolous.

There is an inconsistency in what you said Monday and the press Release Wednesday in which you encourage residents to fix up, clean up, rehabilitate their own neighborhoods. SLACO is effective in nine St. Louis neighborhoods. They were able to catalyze 1,100 people from these neighborhoods to work in your very successful Operation Brightside.

'I think that it is unfortunate that several thousand people have been turned off by your statements in the paper.

Several months ago, Tom Magonia thanked me for helping set up the dialogue between LRA and SLACO which proved to be beneficial to both. Recently, I sat in at meetings with members from the banking community and SLACO members. The purpose of this meeting was to pursue creative cooperative ways of addressing the housing problem in St. Louis. SLACO is not just another garden club.

SLACO has done much good for the city. It is supported by the Campaign for Human Development, St. Louis University, Monsanto, Mercantile Bank, City Bank, and numerous other institutions that have substantial financial interests in the organization. I think that it is ill-advised to ridicule the efforts of an organization receiving assistance from such prestigious organizations.

One week before election, we need the support of every voter to accomplish great things for St. Louis.⁶⁰

John's friendship and influence with many St. Louis political and business leaders is evident throughout his career as a priest. Bill Symes, the former president of the Monsanto Fund, related how Father Shocklee attended a weekly breakfast meeting, attended by many of the business leaders in St. Louis, and how he was never late and the respect shown his remarks. A memo from John in June of 1980 thanked Bill Symes, President of the Monsanto Fund, for the Monsanto Fund gift of \$2000 to Slaco.

John's connection with community organizations that were at odds with the status quo was by no means limited to his membership and active support of Freedom of Residence. Metro Housing Resources (MHR) was often at odds with both St. Louis City government and St. Louis County government. This was especially true regarding community development block grant expenditures. MHR had submitted to the Housing and Urban Development department (HUD) complaints concerning the expenditures by both the City and County annually for at least five years, and had entered law suits against both the City and the County. In one instance, HUD refused to approve the County's application for community development block grant funds, and held the funds in escrow for almost a year. These relationships often made funding difficult for MHR. For example, in a letter to Charles Orlebeke, Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research at HUD, Congresswoman Leonor Sullivan wrote, "I truly believe that County Open Housing (later named Metro Housing Resources), with its community service and church-oriented background, can perform outstanding service in

assisting the St. Louis Housing Authority in the operations of Section 8 along the lines outlined in the application County Open Housing has filed with your Office".⁵¹

Support such as this was seldom forthcoming. Therefore, although John had no position with MHR, his support over the years was essential for their survival. MHR submitted proposals to the St. Louis Community Development Agency (CDA) over a two year period, to establish a program to assist homeless families acquire permanent housing. John suggested to the director of MHR that getting an organization like the Salvation Army to be involved could possibly facilitate the funding. The Salvation Army agreed to participate and a new proposal was submitted. John wrote the following letter to the then director of the Community Development Agency.

Dear Mr. Spaid,

This letter is to inform you that I wholeheartedly support the proposal submitted to the Community Development Agency by the Salvation Army and Metro Housing Resources. The need for emergency housing in the St. Louis area is so very great. It is beneficial for us all that these two agencies are endeavoring to confront the problem.

I am particularly impressed with the fact that there is a built in change factor in this proposal: the St. Louis Housing Authority will provide adequate housing within a sixty day period. This will certainly lend a sense of stability to the program. This is coupled with the Salvation Army's vast experience of providing emergency housing for all.

I ask that you seriously consider this proposal for funding purposes. The City of St. Louis is in dire need of emergency housing facilities, and we cannot ignore the problem any longer. Thank you, in advance, for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

John A. Shocklee

Executive Director⁵²

Thanks to John's suggestion to MHR, and his letter of support, the project was funded. However, because of the antipathy of the Director of CDA for Metro Housing Resources, MHR was forced out, with the compliance of the Salvation Army.

John continued his support for MHR by assisting in funding and by providing much needed advice. When MHR was forced out of the emergency housing project, John wrote the following letter to Senator John Danforth:

Dear Senator Danforth,

It has come to our attention that Metro Housing Resources may lose their Comprehensive Housing Counseling Grant for the coming year. Metro Housing Resources is located at 734 DeMun Boulevard in St. Louis, Missouri.

The locating of adequate housing is such a difficult problem in the St. Louis urban area that we would not wish to see this necessary service discontinued.

Metro Housing Resources serves as a valuable resource to numerous agencies. They have worked on a case-by-case basis with specific clients as well as initiating changes within the system of emergency housing, the Community Development Agency, and the Section 8 program of the St. Louis Housing Authority.

I ask that you intervene in this situation so that funding can be restored to Metro Housing Resources.⁵³

As the Executive Director of the Human Rights Office (HRO), John and HRO offered assistance to parishes in housing matters. Housing discrimination and the exploitation of white fear of African Americans moving into neighborhoods that were formerly all white was a matter of concern, and John offered assistance to parishes

facing such problems. In a Memo to Cardinal Carberry, John informs the Cardinal of HRO participation.

Your Eminence:

Father Mogelnicki, Pastor of Saint Casimir's Parish has requested assistance from the Commission of Human Rights Office to work with him and his parish as the area changes from white to black. We met with him five years ago and offered our services, but he did not think there was a need at that time. The area must be 30%-35% black at the present time. Five years ago it was about 5% black, and would have been easier to work.

We are meeting Tuesday, May 17th with Father Mogelnicki and his parishioners to set up some plans. This is a new role for us, which is important for the archdiocese. There are other parishes in the vicinity that could use our help, e.g., Saint Christopher, Saint Lucy, Saint Sebastian, to name just a few. If we can do a decent job for Father Mogelnicki, and I know he will recommend our services to the other parishes before it's too late.

Our concern is not that blacks are moving into the area, but that fear and exploitation are being used in the Process. There are 7-8 realtors very prominent in the area. We favor the right of everyone to live where he chooses to, but we oppose efforts at steering, and exploitation.

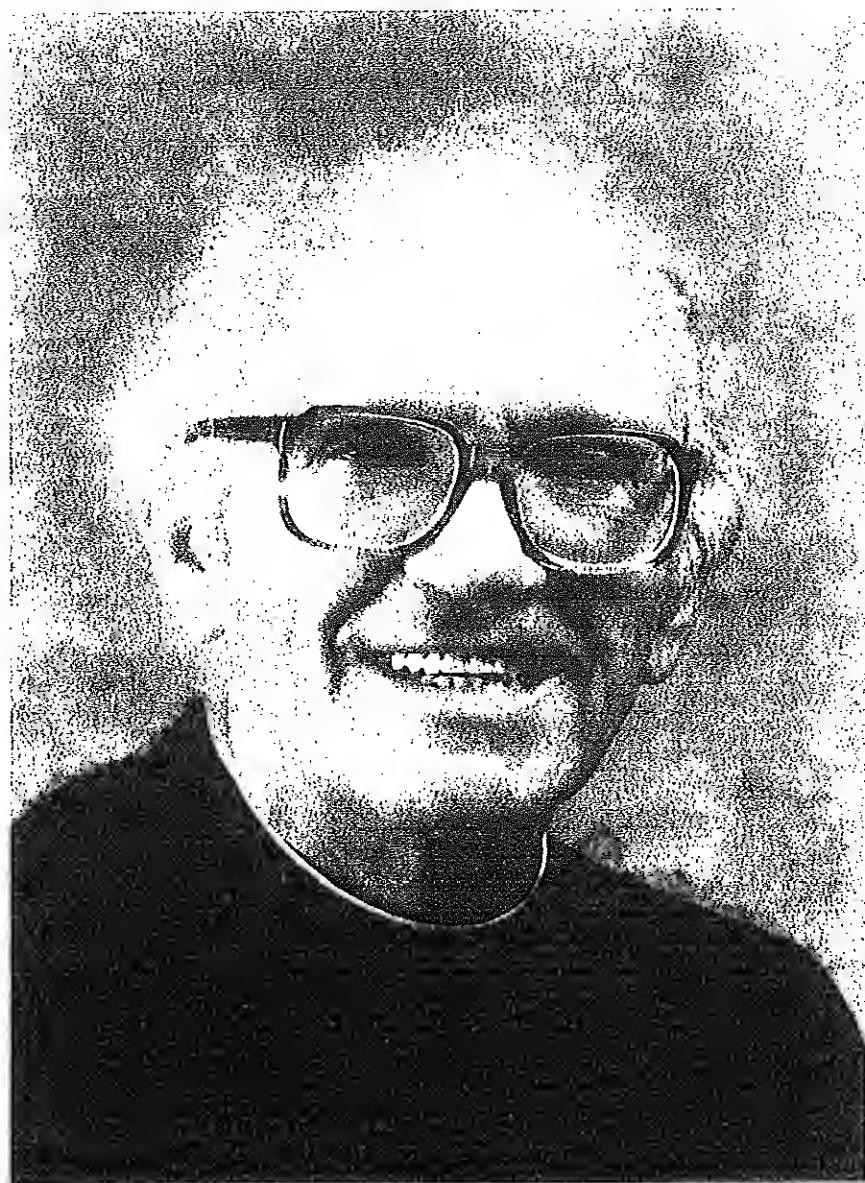
Our present plans are to meet with residents of the area (about 40), to listen to their problems, document charges of law violations, determine the realtors who may be most involved, and hopefully to get people to stand together to stabilize their community.

Frankly I am delighted that Father Mogelnicki called. We cannot move unless the pastor invites us.

I will give you a running account of our activities in Saint Casimir's.

From the time of his appointment as the pastor of St. Bridget and throughout his entire life as a priest, Monsignor John A. Shocklee placed housing high on his agenda for racial and economic justice. When he was appointed by Archbishop Carberry to coordinate the Urban Apostolate, he stated, "There is strong hope that our activities in the housing field may be expanded. We hope there may be money available to the parishes for buying houses which are in danger of ruining a block—a house that is

deteriorating and is liable to drag the neighborhood down with it.⁵⁴ He believed in fair housing, which meant for him that people should be able to live wherever their needs are met. He opposed racial balance activities as being racist and unjust, regardless of the claims that a tipping point exists beyond which integration is replaced by communities turned all or mostly black. He recognized that equal access to housing is the linchpin of economic and educational equality.



REV. MSGR. JOHN A. SHOCKLEE

ST. BRIDGET OF ERIN PASTOR

1956 - 1972

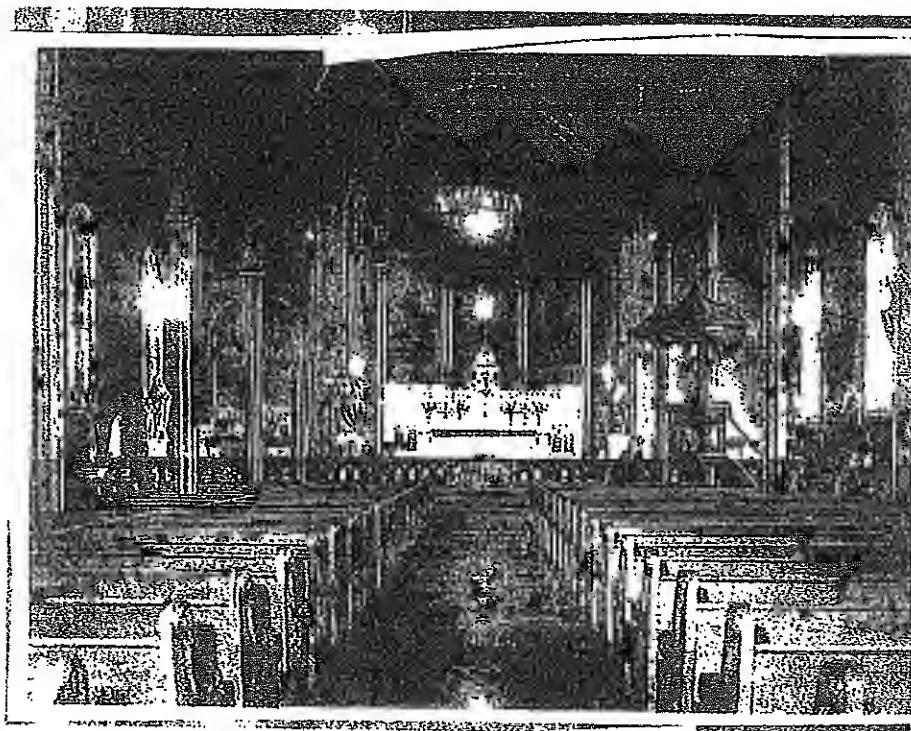
*"Give a man a Fish and he eats for a day.
Teach a man to Fish and he eats for a lifetime."*



MEMORIES



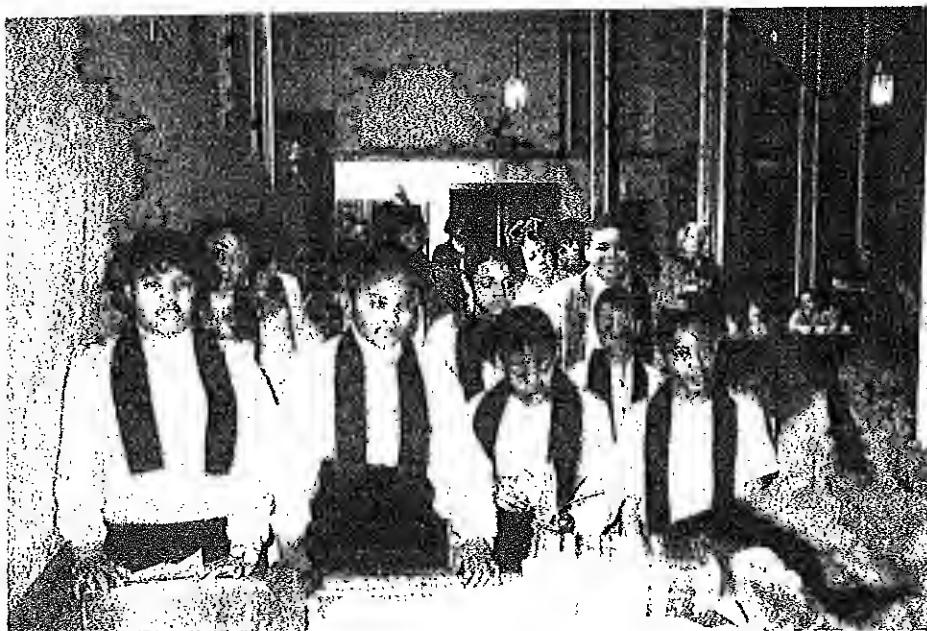
Father Shocklee and Parishioners



Interior of st. Bridget



Adult Choir



Young Adults



Children's Choir

CHAPTER 4 – THE LABOR PRIEST

Monsignor Shocklee was referred to as the labor priest in the obituary that appeared in the Labor Tribune, a union newspaper. He supported the right of working people to organize, and he was highly respected by working people and by the labor movement. Father Richard Creason, in his remarks at Monsignor Shocklee's funeral Mass said, "If we know fully the principles of Catholic social teaching – as well as Msgr. Shocklee's love for their breadth and depth – then we too will fully understand the potential for all people being seen as loving daughters and sons of a living God."¹

Catholic social teaching begins with the Old Testament; actually with the Book of Genesis, where man is commanded to work; "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it."² The Old Testament is replete with references to justice and the care for the poor, and this includes justice for workers. We are commanded to judge our neighbors with justice,³ and to take care of the poor. "There will not be wanting poor in the land of thy habitation: therefore I command thee to open thy hand to thy needy and poor brother that lives in the land."⁴ "The most progressive of all the Jews of Palestine were the Pharisees. They could atone for their sins by acts of loving kindness to their neighbors: charity was the most important mitzvah of the Torah. During the early years of the century, two rival schools had emerged: one led by Shammai the Elder, and the other led by the great Rabbi Hillel the Elder. There is a story that one day a pagan had approached Hillel and told him that he would be willing to convert to Judaism if the

Master could recite the whole of the Torah to him while he stood on one leg. Hillel replied: 'do not do unto others as you would not have done unto you.' That is the whole of the Torah: go and learn it"⁵

"The Church is convinced that work is a fundamental dimension of man's existence on earth." Catholic social teaching is very much about work, and man's relationship to work. As shown above, we see this from the very beginning in the Book of Genesis; "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it." These words do not refer to work explicitly, but they relate to man's activity in the world.

It is the Bible that provides the direction and the roots of Catholic social teaching. "I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the needy, the right of the poor."⁶ "He that despises his neighbor, sins: but he that shows mercy to the poor shall be blessed. He that believes in the Lord loves mercy."⁷ "He judged the cause of the poor and needy for his own good: Was it not therefore because he knew me, said the Lord."⁸

The New Testament, too, has many references to wealth and the care of the poor. "And the multitudes asked him saying, 'What then are we to do?' He answered, and said to them, 'Let him who has two tunics share with him who has none: and let him who has food do in like manner."⁹ "And Jesus said to his disciples, 'Amen I say to you, with difficulty shall a rich man enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you,

it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.”¹⁰

Jesus extended the doctrine of love to embrace all humans, sinners as well as believers and those of different cultures. “And it came to pass that when he was at table in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and were at table with Jesus and his disciples. And the Pharisees, seeing it, said to his disciples, ‘Why does your master eat with publicans and sinners?’ But he heard and said, ‘They that are strong have no need of a physician, but they that are infirm. Go ye and learn what this means: Mercy I desire, and not sacrifice. I have come, not to call just men, but sinners.’¹¹ “What is the first commandment of all? Jesus answered, ‘The first is: Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength.’ The second is this: ‘you shall love thy neighbor as thyself.’¹² When asked, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus said, “A certain man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and went their way, leaving him half dead. And a certain priest happened to be going down along that road, and he saw him and passed him by on the other side. And a Levite likewise came to the place, and saw him and passed on the other side. But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed came upon him, and seeing him was moved with compassion; and drawing near he bound up his wounds, pouring thereon wine and oil. And mounting him upon his own beast, he brought him to a hostel and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two

shillings and gave them to the host and said, 'Take care of him; and what more so ever you spend, myself at my return will repay to you.' 'Which of these three do you think proved a neighbor to him who fell among robbers?' He said, 'He that took pity on him'. And Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do thou also in like manner.'¹³

Early Christians lived communal lives, and shared all things. "And all they that believed held all things in common together, and they used to sell their property and goods and distribute the price among all, according as anyone had need."¹⁴ "Jesus and St. Paul both made it clear that eternal observance was useless if it was not accompanied by charity; it was little better than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."¹⁵ The doctors of the church, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, and St. Thomas Aquinas shared in their concern for the poor and the necessity of charity. The social teaching of the Church never wavered from the dictum that to be Christian demands care for the poor, and the wealthy were often reproached for ignoring the poor.

Catholic social teaching as reflected in the Papal Encyclicals has continued to emphasize the need to care for the poor and those who are otherwise weak, and they have also reflected on the need for justice for workers. The Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, RERUM NOVERUM, set the stage for those that followed: "We thought it expedient now to speak on the condition of the working classes." "In any case we clearly see, and on this there is general agreement, that some opportune remedy must be found quickly for the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class: for the ancient workingmen's guilds were abolished in the last century, and no other

protective organization took their place. Public institutions and the laws set aside the ancient religion. Hence, by degrees it has come to pass that working men have been surrendered, isolated and helpless, to the hard heartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition." "To this must be added that the hiring of labor and the conduct of trade are concentrated in the hands of comparatively few; so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the laboring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery itself." "Is it just that the fruit of a man's own sweat and labor should be possessed and enjoyed by anyone else? As effects follow their cause, so is it just and right that the results of labor should belong to those who have bestowed their labor." "Neither must it be supposed that the solicitude of the Church is so preoccupied with the spiritual concerns of her children as to neglect their temporal and earthly interests. Her desire is that the poor, for example, should rise above poverty and wretchedness, and better their condition in life; and for this she makes a strong endeavor."

In the United States, and indeed in other western democracies, there has always been the debate about whether and how much support should the government provide for its citizens. The encyclicals of the Popes all express the position that the government has a special responsibility to provide a satisfactory quality of life for all. "Still, when there is question of defending the rights of individuals, the poor and badly off have a claim to special consideration. The richer classes have many ways of shielding themselves, and stand less in need of help from the State; whereas the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back upon, and must chiefly depend upon the assistance of the State. And it is for this reason that the wage-earners, since they mostly belong in



POPE LEO XIII.

the mass of the needy should be especially cared for and protected by the government. "Let the working man and the employer make free agreements, and in particular let them agree freely as to the wages; nevertheless, there underlies a dictate of natural justice more imperious than any bargain between man and man, namely that wages ought not to be insufficient to support a frugal and well behaved wage earner. If through necessity or fear of a worse evil, the workman accepts harder conditions, because an employer or contractor will afford him no better, he is made the victim of force and injustice." "In the last place, employers and workmen may of themselves effect much, in the matter we are treating, by means of such associations and organizations as afford opportune aid to those who are in distress, and which draw the two classes more closely together. Among these may be enumerated societies for mutual help; various benevolent foundations established by private persons to provide for the workman, and for his widow or his orphans, in case of sudden calamity, in sickness, and in the event of death; and institutions for the welfare of boys and girls, young people, and those more advanced in years. The most important of all are workingmen's unions, for these virtually include all the rest." "To sum up, then, we may lay it down as a general and lasting law that workingmen's associations should be so organized and governed as to furnish the best and most suitable means for attaining what is aimed at, that is to say, for helping each individual member to better his condition to the utmost in body, soul, and property."¹⁶

In 1931, Pope Pius XI issued the Encyclical QUADRAGESIMO ANNO, On Reconstruction of the Social Order, as a continuation of the work of Leo XIII. "In the first

place Leo himself clearly stated what ought to be expected from the Church: 'Manifestly it is the Church which draws from the Gospel the teachings through which the struggle can be composed entirely, or, after its bitterness is removed, can certainly become more tempered. It is the Church, again, that strives not only to instruct the mind, but to regulate by her precepts the life and morals of individuals, and that ameliorates the condition of the workers through her numerous and beneficent institutions'." "Leo's learned treatment and vigorous defense of the natural right to form associations began, furthermore, to find ready application to other associations also, and not alone to those of the workers. Hence no small part of the credit must, it seems, be given to this same encyclical of Leo for the fact that among farmers and others of the middle class most useful associations of this kind are seen flourishing to a notable degree and increasing day by day, as well as other institutions of a similar nature in which spiritual development and economic benefit are happily combined" "Labor, as our predecessor explained well in his Encyclical, is not a mere commodity. On the contrary, the worker's human dignity in it must be recognized. It therefore cannot be bought and sold like a commodity." Pope Pius XI points out that Leo was not opposed to capitalism as an economic system, and he was criticized by critics on the left, but he was adamantly opposed to unfair and oppressive treatment of workers. "With all his energy Leo XIII sought to adjust this economic system according to the norms of right order; hence, it is evident that this system is not to be condemned in itself. And surely it is not of its own nature vicious. But it does violate right order when capital hires workers, that is, the non-owning working class, with a view to and under such terms that it directs business and even the whole economic system according to its own will and advantage, scorning the

human dignity of the workers, the social character of economic activity and social justice itself, and the common good." In the first place, it is obvious that not only is wealth concentrated in our times but an immense power and despotic economic dictatorship is consolidated in the hands of a few, who often are not owners but only the trustees and managing directors of invested funds which they administer according to their own arbitrary will and pleasure."¹⁷

Pope Pius XI affirmed the contention of Leo that the poor and workers are in need of government protection, as they are without the means to protect themselves. He also continued Leo's position on the rights of workers to form associations and unions.

Pope John XXIII continued to emphasize that the state has the responsibility to protect the rights of everyone, but particularly the weakest members of society, which he identified as the workers, women, and children. John XXIII also pointed out that the state had a duty to insure that "the terms of employment are regulated in accordance with justice and equity and to safeguard the dignity of workers". He continued the position of his predecessors by stating "all forms of economic enterprise must be governed by social justice and charity". He provides the fundamental principle guiding Catholic social teaching as being that "individual human beings are the foundation, the cause and the end of every social institution, for men are by nature social beings". Finally, an important element in this Encyclical not mentioned in previous Encyclicals is that Catholic social doctrine should be taught as part of the curriculum in Catholic

schools of every kind, particularly in seminaries. It must be provided in every way possible and people must be taught to make it a reality through positive action.¹⁸

Catholic social teaching continued with the same emphasis on charity and justice for the poor and for workers through successive papal Encyclicals: Pope Paul VI, Vatican II – *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, and *Populorum Progressio* in 1967. *Gaudium et Spes* introduces and embraces the brotherhood of all humans, and points to the suffering of a major part of the world's people in a world that enjoys an unprecedented abundance of wealth and economic well being. It is represented as being the Pastoral Constitution On The Modern World. Pope Paul indicates that Christians are mistaken if they believe that they can "shirk their earthly responsibilities" and focus on religious worship alone. He reiterates the right of workers to form unions and "the right of freely taking part in the activities of these unions without risk of reprisal", as well as verifying the right of workers to strike. In *Populorum Progressio*, Pope Paul, at the very beginning stresses the universality of man, and he indicated that the social issues facing the world binds all men together. The poverty in some nations and the wealth of others often requires men to leave their poorer home countries for the more wealthy ones in order to earn a living for their families. He insists that a warm welcome be given to foreigners and that emigrant workers should be welcomed and provided with humane living conditions. Less than human conditions is when "The material poverty of those who lack the bare necessities of life, and the moral poverty of those who are crushed under the weight of their own self love".¹⁹

Pope John Paul II continues to expand on Catholic Social Teaching, and continues Paul's ideas concerning the labor question as one embracing the whole world. "While in the past, the class question was especially highlighted as the center of this issue, in more recent times it is the world question that is emphasized." John Paul points out that his predecessors all recognized that there is a disproportionate distribution of wealth and poverty in the world that must be addressed if we are to assure the development of the poorer countries. He sees human work as the key to the social question, and begins his discussion of work with the Book of Genesis: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it". In his discussion of work he emphasizes, as did his predecessors, the right of workers to organize and to strike, but more than past popes, he discussed the concern of the Church for workers in poor countries being exploited for higher profits. His is a strong statement for the solidarity of workers around the world.²⁰

In 1891, a year before John A. Ryan entered St. Paul Seminary, *Rerum Novarum* was published. The Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII became Ryan's guide for Catholic Social Teaching during his entire tenure as a priest, later a monsignor, college professor, and influential writer and lecturer. Although not referred to as such, he was, nevertheless, the first labor priest of the modern era, and those who came later used his work as a model to pursue. He was an intellectual, not an activist as were those who were influenced by his writings and lectures, but "his work encouraged political and economic changes he felt necessary for a more fair and egalitarian society." Ryan supported the minimum wage and child labor legislation, and he authored the Bishop's Program of

Social Reconstruction, issued in 1919 in the name of the American Bishops. The Roosevelt Administration adopted many of his recommendations. Ryan's closeness to FDR earned him the nickname of "Right Reverend New Dealer". Roosevelt asked Ryan to be the first Catholic priest to provide the invocation at a presidential inauguration.²¹ At some point in their careers, all who followed and were called "Labor Priest" made reference to their indebtedness to Monsignor John A. Ryan.

Many cities in the United States had priests who they called their labor priest. Most were not well known outside of their own parish or city, but some attained national and even international recognition. The Papal encyclicals, all taken together, point to the sacredness of work and the worker, the need for justice in the treatment and remuneration of workers, the right of the worker to form associations and unions, and the use of the strike to gain worker rights and just compensation. The labor priests took these ideas and applied them to their societies. They knew one another and participated in the same activities and were often found to be in the same place at the same time. There was Msgr. Charles Rice, Pittsburgh's Labor Priest. He died on November 13, 2005, at the age of 96. An obituary in the National Catholic Reporter called him "Pittsburgh's Labor Priest", and stated: Charles Owen Rice should be remembered for his feet and his fire --- the footfalls on all those picket lines nationwide and the passion of his oratory on behalf of workers. He should be celebrated for his seven decades of devotion as a priest to the causes of peace, equality and economic justice. More than just a union supporter in Western Pennsylvania, Msgr. Rice was an American social activist of the 20th century. In one of his columns, he said, 'Mine was a rip-roaring

denunciation of the steel magnates and the infamy of great wealth.' He brought the same intensity to the civil rights movement and marches and teach-ins against the Vietnam War. He protested steel plant shut-downs and joined striking workers of the Pittsburgh Press in 1992."²²

Other notable labor priests included Msgr. John J. Egan, the Chicago Labor Priest, Father Edward F. Boyle, Boston's Labor Priest, and Monsignor John Shocklee, the St. Louis Labor Priest. There are many more labor priests in cities and towns in the United States, and many more in other countries around the world. Those mentioned here represent a number of priests who knew one another and who fought for the same issues. They consulted with one another and were often found together in support of labor or civil rights. For example, several marched with Dr. King at Selma, Alabama. Several of them would meet at the Chicago airport from time to time, mull over the issues of the day, and fly back to their respective parishes.²³

This obituary for Msgr. Rice, in general, would be found in the obituaries of all the labor priests, even those whose work had a different thrust. One such labor priest was Msgr. George Higgins, a professor at Catholic University of America. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Clinton. United Farm Workers' leader Cesar Chavez said that no one in the country did more for the farm workers than Msgr. Higgins.²⁴ As an academician Msgr. Higgins was probably the most prolific writer of the labor priests and, therefore, had great influence on the Catholic Labor Movement and Catholic social teaching. He was often referred to as "America's Labor Priest". He was

not the activist on the street, as were Msgr. Rice and Msgr. Shocklee, but he was nevertheless a major advocate for justice for workers. Msgr. Shocklee was a friend and they consulted with one another on matters related to labor, as well as to other issues. An example of how they and other labor priests cooperated with and supported one another is seen in a letter Msgr. Shocklee wrote to Msgr. Higgins. Higgins was the Secretary for Research for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Bishops decided to close Higgins' office. As a result of a letter written by John to the Bishops, they reversed their decision. Msgr. Higgins had worked closely with Msgr. Shocklee when he attempted to defeat Right to Work legislation in Missouri. On November 27, 1978, Shocklee wrote the following letter to Msgr. Higgins.

Dear George,

We are grateful that the Bishops reversed their decision about the future of your office. It was a wise move on their part and gives lead time to plan for the future.

Thank you for your observations in the debate on Right to Work. We used your office several times in securing needed information for our fight in Missouri.

We are in the process of analyzing why we won so easily in Missouri. New coalitions were formed including the working-man, the unions, the Church, the Blacks, the farm vote, and an unexpected ally – middle management people.

We are compiling the process we used as part of that coalition for use in other states should a similar effort be made to destroy unions.²⁵

On April 26, 1998, Msgr. Higgins gave the homily for the Labor Day Mass at The Shrine of St. Joseph in St. Louis, at the request of Msgr. Shocklee. That his relationship with Msgr. Shocklee continued is reflected in an article he wrote for The Catholic – Labor Network in July of 2001, concerning a right-to-work legislation referendum in Oklahoma. He called attention to the 1978 defeat of right-to-work legislation proposed for Missouri and the opposition by the Missouri Catholic Conference.

Monsignor Shocklee led the fight in Missouri to defeat amendment 23, the Right to Work Law. There was opposition from many quarters, but very definitely from Catholics who supported the legislation, particularly Catholic business interests. "John O. Shields, a Ladue insurance broker, said at a press conference here Monday that Missouri Catholics for Right to Work was being organized in response to public statements opposing the amendment by the Missouri Catholic Conference and the Archdiocesan Commission on Human Rights."

"We just want to get some dialogue going on both the pro and con positions with respect to the Right to Work Amendment", said Shields. "The position taken by Bishop Wurm and Msgr. John A. Shocklee obviously represent only one Catholic point of view."²⁶

Some Catholic Missouri legislators also opposed the view held by Msgr. Shocklee and Bishop Wurm. They took the position that they were concerned that "this political activity, as well as past political activities taints the Church". They based their position on the contention that the Conference opposition to the Right to Work legislation was contrary to the wishes of Pope John Paul I, who they said "was widely quoted and praised for his discouragement of these church officials dabbling in the political affairs of the community, wisely recognizing that such political acts tend to influence only a few, but often cast a jaundiced eye on the church and hinder its more important mission".²⁷

Because there was much misunderstanding of just what was meant by "Right to Work" John and the Human Rights Office set up meetings for both priests and laymen. The St. Louis Globe Democrat reported that a poll conducted by Charron Research and Information of St. Louis indicated that 21.2 percent of respondents knew that Right to Work means a ban on union membership as a condition of employment, while 45 percent thought that Right to Work meant equal employment opportunity or freedom of choice.²⁸

Regardless of the opposition from well placed Catholics and attacks directed at him personally, Msgr. Shocklee continued his fight against Amendment 23, the Right to Work legislation. The following letter was signed or approved in abstention by 26 priests.

"Dear Fathers and Friends,

At a recent meeting held by Msgr. John A. Shocklee to discuss Amendment No. 23, the following letter was approved. Due to the short time, we were not able to contact each priest in the Archdiocese prior to developing the letter.

As you probably know, there is a great deal of misunderstanding and controversy surrounding Amendment No. 23, the right-to-work constitutional amendment.

Recently the Missouri Catholic Conference and the Archdiocesan Commission on Human Rights have taken positions against and in opposition to Amendment No. 23.

As individuals we personally agree with and support the resolutions of the Missouri Catholic Conference and the Commission on Human Rights, which call for a no vote on Amendment No.23. We feel that the Catholic Church, from the time of Pope Leo XIII (1891), has consistently and outspokenly advocated for the rights of working people, especially the

right to bargain collectively. While many complex questions are being injected into the debate around Amendment No.23, we feel the essential issue proposed by this measure is: Should the collective bargaining right be weakened? We think that it should not.

We would urge your careful consideration of this very important matter. Also we would ask that you make every effort to attend one of the educational seminars being planned, and you encourage others to attend.

Sincerely,"

Signed by 26 diocesan priests.

The Human Rights Office, under the direction of Msgr. Shocklee, scheduled eight educational seminars for the diocese. Locations, Dates, and Times, were attached to the above letter. Also enclosed with the letter was basic economic data on the Right To Work issue. The following preceded the data information: " The effect on a worker's paycheck is directly related to the existence of the 'right-to-work' laws. Statistics indicate that workers earn less in the RTW states because they are unable to effectively organize and maintain unions."²⁹

An editorial in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, of Sept.3, 1978, weighs-in in opposition to RTW legislation. The editorial states that arguments by the right-to-work leaders are often self-serving and "some downright hypocritical". The concluding paragraph asks if Missouri wants to follow states like Arkansas and Mississippi, which have RTW laws or Illinois, which doesn't. "Right-to-work does not really offer the progress claimed for it. It offers, instead, a long step backward toward days of the open shop and bitter industrial discord. Missouri can do without it."³⁰

Monsignor Shocklee is largely credited for the successful defeat of the Right To Work Amendment No.23 in Missouri. In an interview with Bob Kelly, a union executive, he stated that he thought the RTW legislation would have passed if it had had the

support of Catholics. He said that Shocklee and Monsignor Francis Doyle were the real lightning rods in defeating Amendment No.23, and that they both took a real beating from some Catholic lay people. "They were out in the street making speeches, they were all over the place trying to convince people to oppose the Right-To-Work. It turned out to be very much supported by Catholics. Monsignor Shocklee was everywhere."³¹

As Kelly stated, Shocklee took a beating from many conservative Catholics, but he was also highly respected and loved by many others. "The crowd at the breakfast meeting gave a standing ovation to Monsignor John Shocklee , executive director of the Commission on Human Rights of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, who has come under fire for his role as spokesman for the Missouri Catholic Conference's opposition to Amendment 23."³²

In the interview with Bob Kelly, it is apparent that Monsignor Shocklee was highly respected by the unions. It was just taken for granted that Shocklee was the labor priest. Kelly related how he and Dick Mantia, a labor executive with the Building Trades Council, went to St. Joseph's Shrine, because they heard that it was in disrepair. They went to see what needed to be done to restore it. "The birds were flying through the rafters – the place was a wreck". One way to restore it was to raise money by having a union Mass with a breakfast after. ""We logically immediately turned to John to be the one to say the Mass, and so for the first many years he was the celebrant and homilist at the Mass." The labor Mass familiarized people with the Shrine of St. Joseph. The Mass continues to be held every Labor Day, and today is celebrated by Father Richard Creason who, as a young priest, worked with Monsignor Shocklee at the Human Rights Office, and who continues to carry on his work with the poor and with workers. Father

Creason, like Monsignor Shocklee, is an activist priest who leads his congregation in accordance with the social teachings of the Church.

In May of 1991, the St. Louis Review interviewed Msgr. Shocklee in connection with the anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. "Rerum Novarum was a shock to the world when it came out 100 years ago, because the Church was not supposed to be concerned about material things. It brought out very much the interest of the Church in the material welfare of the people," Msgr. Shocklee said. "Now we've lived with the idea for 100 years." Referring to labor relations and employment concerns, Mgr Shocklee said, "Now the problems are still there and always will be. But it need not be a conflict. We're not looking for conflicts between management and labor. Rather we seek an openness for them to sit down and negotiate their differences for the good of the employer as well as the employee. I hope we've reached a point where people are talking about the principles of *Rerum Novarum*, but it was a shock in 1891."³³

John Shocklee and all the Labor Priests worked in accordance to Catholic social teaching as promulgated by all of the Papal Encyclicals, since *Rerum Novarum* in 1891. But the teaching of Catholic social doctrine, as suggested by Pope John XXIII in *Mater et Magistra*, has not been accorded the same adherence by most of the clergy, or even by the Bishops. Bob Kelly was concerned about the Church focusing on one issue, abortion, and neglecting the issue of worker's rights. He told about an archbishop that was invited to dinner by some of the union leadership who wanted to feel him out, because he had just been appointed to the archdiocese. After the dinner, he sent each of the union men a signed copy of *Rerum Novarum*. Later, when the Catholic

elementary school teachers wanted to form a union, he wouldn't permit it. One of the union men asked Kelly, "Do you think he read Rerum Novarum ?"³⁴

Monsignor Shocklee's involvement with unions and justice for workers was extensive and extended far beyond St. Louis. Worker related issues from wherever found support from Msgr. Shocklee. A letter from Richard Trumka, President of The United Mine Workers of America to Msgr. Shocklee is Indicative of Shocklee's involvement in labor disputes beyond St. Louis.

Dear Monsignor Shocklee,

I am pleased to inform you that on December 14, 1993, the rank-and-file membership of the United Mine Workers of America voted by an overwhelming margin to ratify the new contract negotiated with the companies of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, thus ending our more than seven month strike.

Your willingness to speak out in support of justice in America's coalfields was heartwarming and critically important in helping us reach this victory. The United Mine workers greatly values our relationship with the religious community and we will not forget your support for us. On behalf of our entire membership, please accept our thanks and best wishes.

Richard Trumka³⁵

In 1985, in opposition to Apartheid, John supported the disinvestment by the City of St. Louis of any and all funds in banks, financial institutions, or corporations that makes loans to the Republic of South Africa. Then in 1986, he supported the disinvestment of stocks owned by the St. Louis Archdiocese that directly or indirectly did business in South Africa. In addition he was supportive of efforts to persuade city and state governments to divest their pension funds from holdings in South Africa.

John was never negligent in congratulating others who were in support of workers or Justice issues. On December 30, 1981, John wrote to Reverend George Mayer of St. Bridget Catholic Church in Pacific, Missouri, congratulating him on his requesting his parishioners to cease patronizing the IGA Store in Pacific. The IGA Store had been a union shop, but Wetterau Corporation transferred the name to a new owner. The store was closed for four days, after which the new owners reopened it as a non-union store. The former employees were picketing and Father Mayer requested his parishioners not to cross the picket lines.

John's active participation in matters related to Labor and Labor Unions was deep and constant over his entire tenure as a priest, even including his retirement period with the Little Sisters of the Poor. One of his more public stands was with Caesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers.

Chavez started organizing farm workers in 1950 with Dolores Huerta. He felt that there was a need to form a union to make demands on the growers for better wages and for better working conditions. He and Huerta founded the National Farm Workers Association in 1962. In 1965 they merged with the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, which was later called the United Farm Workers, and joined with them in a strike in Delano, California. The strike lasted for five years and was the start of boycotts as a weapon against the growers.

In 1975 the Agricultural Labor Relations Act was passed as a result of another grape boycott in the mid1970s. There were also pickets before retail outlets and marches around the country. All of these strategies and activities continued through the eighties and were supported by Monsignor Shocklee and the Human Rights Office. "John was totally committed to justice for the farm workers. A staff member of the United Farm Workers, Michael Savage, got involved. He was influenced by Richard Cook, who was more or less in charge of the religious community organized around the needs of the farm workers. Cook would come around and get people involved in picketing in front of stores, and so forth."³⁶

Father Creason said, "The Farm Workers boycott of lettuce was another issue which I remember John publicly supporting, but he was not so much directly involved in the issue. I also remember John hosting Caesar Chavez a couple of times when he came to St. Louis.

John made connections with the Schnuck family, owners of the Schnuck grocery chain, to support the right of the farm workers to organize. I was peripherally involved with the local farm workers group. Richard Cook, the local agent for the Farm Workers Support Ministry, asked if I would play an intermediary role by receiving a phone call from Donald Schnuck , the CEO of the Schnuck stores. I indicated that I would be willing to play such a role. Donald Schnuck did not want to deal with the Farm Workers directly, but he did want to respond in a way that would end the boycott. I was told that I would receive a late night call from him. He was attending a business meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada. I received the call from Donald Schnuck around midnight and was told that Schnucks would remove Red Coach Lettuce from their sales shelves, but that he would take no public role with the Farm Workers, or address publicly the lettuce boycott. He struck me a man true to his word, but who simply wanted to sell food products without being involved in social issues. I surmise that any involvement would likely result in a loss of business for their stores, which is exactly why a boycott can be an effective strategy.³⁷

In response to a letter from a former student who was opposed to Shocklee's support of the Farm Workers, John said, "The issue is simple – do workers have a right to select a union, or reject a union. If they do not have the right, then they are slaves of a totalitarian system. I cannot vouch for everything that Chavez does. Neither can I vouch for everything that

the Gallo brothers do. I am interested in only one point – that there be free, secret ballot elections for workers in the grape and lettuce industry, to determine whether or not they want a union, and if they do want union representation, which union do they want.

I am Catholic enough to cooperate with the authority of the Church. In November 1973 the National Council of Catholic Bishops encouraged support of the Farm Workers until the time when free elections became a reality. The Bishops bear ultimate responsibility for the Church and need our support.³⁸

Monsignor Shocklee and the St. Louis Archdiocese Commission on Human Rights came out in support of a boycott of products produced by the J.P. Stevens Company. Stevens was the second largest textile manufacturer in the United States, at the time of the boycotts. The boycott of Stevens was a major effort nationwide by religious groups of almost every denomination. Stevens employed 45,000 women and men in 85 textile plants operating mostly in the Southern Right-to-Work states. According to a "White Paper" published by the Heritage Foundation, the AFL-CIO was attempting to unionize the Southern Textile Industry because of the economic growth of the South and Southwest, and selected J.P. Stevens Company to target because of its size and number of plants throughout the South. They pointed to the fact that union activity previously had been in the Northern industrial states, which had racial and

cultural diverse groups that were able to provide radical union leadership. The South, however, was homogeneous: "Catholic and Jewish minorities in the South are sprinkled lightly only in the major cities. With the exception of blacks, the Southern work force is Protestant and white".³⁹

In 1963, the Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA) began trying to organize the workers of the J. P. Stevens Company. Although the company was found guilty by the National Labor Relations Board 15 times of unfair labor practices, and the convictions were upheld by the Circuit Court eight times and by the Supreme Court three times, the organizing efforts were largely unsuccessful. In 1976, TWUA merged with the larger Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU), and the new union, along with the AFL- CIO changed tactics and began a nationwide boycott of Stevens' products. The boycott was supported by a large coalition of clergy from numerous religious denominations, civil rights groups and northern politicians.

On February 24, 1978, The Commission On Human Rights issued the following news release.

"On February 23, 1978, the Commission on Human Rights of the Archdiocese of St. Louis issued a statement in support of the collective bargaining efforts of the J.P. Stevens

employees as well as its support of the nationwide boycott of J.P. Stevens products. Msgr. John A. Shocklee is executive director of the Human Rights Commission.

Based on Catholic social teaching and tradition on social and economic justice, the commission is compelled to join in support of the worker's cause.⁴⁰

In addition to the news release issued by Monsignor Shocklee on behalf of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) issued a statement Concerning Economic Justice For Employees Of The J.P. Stevens Company. The statement reaffirmed the Archdiocese support of the boycott: "The Commission on Human Rights of the Archdiocese of St. Louis in session February 23, 1978, endorses and supports the Stevens employees' endeavor to achieve economic justice and humane and safe working conditions through collective bargaining. Be it further resolved that the boycott of Stevens' products be supported until such time as collective bargaining takes place and the company halts its illegal and discriminatory activities."⁴¹

Catholic organizations across the nation came out in support of the boycott, as did both Protestant and Jewish denominations. The National Conference of Catholic Charities (NCCC) issued a resolution on the J. P. Stevens Company Labor-Management Controversy in 1977. The resolution was similar to that of the St. Louis Diocese that came later in 1978, but differed slightly in that the NCCC joined with the Bishops of the Atlanta Province and the Bishop of Richmond. Stevens employed mostly

in Southern States and the Southern Bishops felt directly involved. The Bishops offered to mediate in the controversy and the NCCC supported the Southern Bishops and their efforts.⁴²

Monsignor Shocklee's friend and fellow labor priest, Rev. Patrick Sullivan, was the contact person for the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice. A statement was issued on their behalf listing Six Reasons To Boycott J. P. Stevens.

1. They are the second largest textile industrialist and have been found guilty of tax evasion.
2. They have been found guilty of discriminatory hiring practices.
3. They have been found guilty of firing and threatening pro-union employees.
4. They have been found guilty of coercion of employees through interrogation.
5. Thousands of workers have been disabled by the dread disease byssiosis (brown lung) caused by cotton dust levels almost three times as high as national minimum health standards allow.
6. Wages in Stevens plants average 31% below average national factory wage.

Five Things You Can Do To Help Achieve Social Justice For J. P. Stevens
Workers.

1. Spread the word about J. P. Stevens campaign.

2. Check your personal and institutional investment portfolio.
3. Do not buy J. P. Stevens products.
4. Join us and other groups trying to help the textile workers.
5. Contact: Rev. Patrick J. Sullivan ⁴³

Under the direction of Shocklee, the Human Rights Office (HRO) would distribute all relevant documents and information to all of the parishes and priests within the archdiocese. John would speak out on behalf of the boycott and would be interviewed by media on the subject. He was also always involved with other denominations in racial and labor related activities. The Stevens boycott was definitely an ecumenical endeavor. The St. Louis Labor Tribune reported: "Local Jewish leaders censure J. P. Stevens: At its Dec. 5, 1977 meeting, the St. Louis Rabbinical Association joined the growing list of religious organizations endorsing the consumer boycott of J. P. Stevens Company products. The action of the St. Louis Rabbinical Association follows a considerable period of examination of the conflict between the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and the management of J. P. Stevens Company. The resolution reaffirms the right of employees to organize for collective bargaining in order to achieve economic justice and safe working conditions. It further condemns the J. P. Stevens Company for its record of Labor violations and its efforts to thwart the unionization of its employees. The St. Louis Rabbinical Association urges all

Jewish organizations as well as all members of the St. Louis Jewish Community to participate in the boycott of J. P. Stevens' products."⁴⁴

Although the international boycott was an important element in bringing about the historic settlement in 1980, after 17 years of union struggle against Stevens Company, there were other forces at work as well. "The union's success in gaining the first ever collective bargaining agreements for more than 3000 workers in ten plants in the Carolinas and Alabama -- has been widely attributed to the multifaceted corporate campaign program devised by ACTWU staffer Ray Rogers. As the veteran labor reporter A.H. Raskin of the New York Times wrote: 'Pressure on giant banks and insurance companies and other Wall Street pillars, all aimed at isolating Stevens from the financial community, helped generate a momentum ---- that could not be achieved through the 1976-1980 worldwide boycott of Stevens products or through more conventional use of union muscle such as strikes and mass picketing.' Raskin quoted Ray Rogers: 'We took the strength of the company and made that its weakness --- We forced the power elite behind J. P. Stevens --- its principal leaders and companies with which it had interlocking directorates to put the squeeze on it.' Other highlights included organizing mass shareholder actions at J. P. Stevens' and other companies' annual meetings. More than 600 individuals and organizations each purchased a share of Stevens stock for the campaign's first mass action in March of 1977 in New York City. Hundreds of people holding stock proxies and representing unions, religious, community and political organizations lined up at the entrance

to Stevens' corporate headquarters, waiting to enter to attend the company's annual meeting so that they could directly confront management. At the same time, 4000 protesters marched around Stevens Tower. The company, which had held its annual meeting in Manhattan for many decades, moved it to South Carolina the next year and never again held it in New York.⁴⁵

Even Hollywood became involved with the production of Norma Ray, the true story of the efforts of a union organizer and one woman, Crystal Lee Sutton, to organize the Stevens plant in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. "The battle of the union and the company has become one of the epic sagas of union-versus-management history ---one fought more with modern tools of public relations than old fashioned fists.

Norma Ray is probably one of the most powerful tools the labor movement will ever have. Its moving saga of simple good and bad, of plain people winning against the bad-guy establishment, has inspired thousands and certainly clinched a career uplift for actress Sally Field, who will always be remembered holding up that UNION sign.

But of course real life is not that simple. Crystal Lee Sutton doesn't have a 22 inch waist, and the labor movement is not a simple morality play between the good (workers) and the bad (management). Crystal Lee Sutton is just a woman – feistier and more plainspoken than most, but possessed of no mythical powers.

Her gifts are her convictions and her willingness to be heard --- a willingness that in a small North Carolina town was courageous, but on the larger stage where so many causes are fighting for attention, she may seem to be just another voice in a chorus."⁴⁶

The boycott against J. P. Stevens ended in 1980. "As part of the 1980 Stevens Settlement, the company demanded what the news media called 'the Ray Rogers Clause,' which stated in part: ----'the union will not engage in any corporate campaign against the company---(and) will not in any manner attempt to effectuate the resignation of members of the board of directors of Stevens, or to effectuate the resignation or removal of Stevens executives from the boards of directors of other companies, or to restrict the availability of financial credit accommodations to Stevens, or by deliberate conduct to affect materially and adversely the relationship between Stevens and any other business organization."⁴⁷

John's activities with labor extended beyond activism. He was involved in direct participation with union and labor activities. He consulted with union leaders and participated in political actions benefitting labor. He was a labor negotiator and was considered fair by both labor and management. James P. O'Grady, a labor arbitrator, said that John was always fair and was diligent in his position and in his approach to issues.

During the interview with Bob Kelly, he said that he met John when they were both young men starting out. "John was involved in civil rights, apprenticeship programs, reaching out to people and getting people jobs. I was doing my work with the union and John was trying to get minorities into apprenticeships. The Union was very paternalistic – if your father was a member then you could be a member – it was a father son sort of thing. He tried to make changes and it didn't happen overnight, but he was someone the union trusted and things began to change. When they needed an arbitrator, they trusted John and would ask him. John recognized the history of the institution, so he wanted to change the attitudes in the organization while understanding that the history was paternalistic.

John was on the Board of the Pension and Welfare program for the District 9 Machinist Union. In a telephone interview with Fred Speckman of the Machinist Union, he explained that the Pension Board consisted of three people; a union representative, a corporate representative, and a neutral representative. John was the neutral representative and was very fair. "John took positions that would be best for the plan. He was a fair minded person and was willing to help and serve for any good cause."⁴⁸

Bob Kelly said, "John had a unique perspective when at the Human Rights Office. For example, the situation at Chrysler when Chrysler wanted to close the Fenton Plant. . So many jobs were being lost and John went against the conventional wisdom of whether the government should get involved. John

stepped up against the conventional wisdom. With John, it wasn't just writing and talking about the issues that came up everyday, you had to get involved."⁴⁹

Chrysler Corporation entered Missouri in 1960 with two plants in Fenton, Missouri, Fenton North and Fenton South. They produced in both plants until 1980, when they closed Fenton North, which produced the pickup truck. In 1986 they reopened Fenton North to produce the Dodge Caravan and the Plymouth Voyager. Then in 1990, Chrysler discontinued its passenger car production and shut down Fenton South.⁵⁰

John joined the efforts of Rev. Ted Schroeder to keep the Fenton plant open. Schroeder had been working with the union at the Chrysler Plant. "Monsignor Shocklee has been very active in labor-management relations. Shocklee and Schroeder issued a statement on the plant closing, which Shocklee read at a rally held by Chrysler workers. 'Because of the effect any such closing could have on many, many people, it becomes more than an economic issue; it is first and foremost a moral issue'. He said, referring to labor relations and labor reform first brought up in Rerum Novarum, 'Now the problems are still there and always will be. But it need not be a conflict. We're not looking for conflicts between management and labor. Rather, we seek an openness for them to sit down and negotiate their differences for the good of the employer as well as the employee.'

'It's all covered by the broader term of peace and justice that the Holy Father keeps speaking on. That message, as it is found in papal encyclicals --- beginning with *Rerum Novarum* --- and the U.S. bishops pastoral letters, often ends up on the shelf.' Msgr. Shocklee added. The commission is 'the upfront group that keeps these issues alive' by promoting them throughout the Church here."⁵¹ As was always the case, John was guided by Catholic social teaching and the papal encyclicals. In a memo to staff on June 5, 1987, John stated, "The dignity of the human person, realized in community with others, is the criterion against which all aspects of economic life must be measured."

The St. Louis Archdiocese was the first in the country to initiate Project Equality, a program to use the purchasing power of the Church to encourage fair employment opportunity. It started in St. Louis in 1967, but it seems that it was stalled or stopped. In a St. Louis Review article about his appointment as the Director of the Human Rights Commission Shocklee said that he would initiate efforts to revive Project Equality. "Project Equality seems to be suited to parish human rights groups, who can monitor the practices of business that the parish deals with", he said.⁵²

John continued to support worker and union activities his entire life. He supported boycotts, such as the Campbell soup boycott, and he was supportive of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee. He delivered the Invocation at union

meetings and supported the Sheet Metal Workers Union, and spoke at their 35th year convention.

John also did his research and was able to speak authoritatively on matters being addressed. An example is a letter to the editor concerning the Anheuser – Busch truck Drivers.

"Are A-B Truck Drivers Treated Fairly?"

Many people in our community breathed a sigh of relief at the recent contract settlement between Teamsters Local 133 and Lohr distributing – the company that supplies Anheuser – Bush products in St. Louis. No one wants to see labor strife at a company that plays such a major part in virtually every aspect of our commercial and cultural life.

The 58 workers and their families and the many area businesses and consumers who supported the A-B boycott should all feel a sense of pride in helping to bring a settlement to this most troubling conflict.

The settlement was prompted by a June 12 Commentary article by Lee J. Waltemade, Vice President of corporate labor relations at Anheuser-Bush. At the heart of the Lohr-Teamster dispute was the relationship between A-B and its independent wholesalers. I find that particularly disturbing.

Anheuser-Busch cares enough about its image to issue clear guidelines to its distributors regarding the cleanliness and appearance of both trucks and driver's uniforms. If the company's inanimate symbols are subject to review and guidance, shouldn't the flesh and blood of the company and its subsidiaries be given the same attention?

It's a serious question for Anheuser-Bush. Despite Waltemade's statement that the company encourages wholesalers to "build strong working relationships with their union personnel," A-B's record in this area is particularly disappointing.

As documented in recent testimony before the St. Louis Board of Aldermen, our community is not the only case in point.

- In Detroit, workers hurt on the job who have been out for more than six months on disability are now being unilaterally terminated by the local A-B distributor. This leaves loyal, dedicated employees and their families with no health care coverage and a very uncertain future.
- The Houston A-B distributor is still engaged in a practice that conjures up the days of segregation. Despite local protests, the company clings to a delivery system dictated by the color of the driver's skin, and designates certain routes as white, black or Hispanic.

- The Worcester, Mass., A-B distributor was cited by the National Labor Relations Board for provoking a strike while trying to maintain a public front of good-faith bargaining. The labor board chastised the company for "fraudulent concealment of its unlawful conduct in the initial phase of its ongoing scheme to oust the union.

All of these instances and seemingly intractable disputes in San Diego, Akron, Ohio and New York City show why A-B needs to find new ways to do business with its independent wholesalers. Whenever we see a truck with an A-B logo, we should be able to feel confident that the driver of that truck is treated fairly and with dignity.

That was accomplished here in St. Louis, and I hope that Anheuser-Bush strives for the same goal across the country.

Monsignor John Shocklee

Member

Justice for Bud Delivery Drivers

St. Louis⁵³

Monsignor Shocklee perceived the dignity of workers as the criteria for the economic well-being of society. "The dignity of the human person, realized in

community with others, is the criterion against which all aspects of economic life must be measured.”⁵⁴

In 1993, the Commission on Human Rights passed a motion creating a Committee On Labor And Religion. The creation of this committee was very important, as it was a definite statement to guide Catholics in the Archdiocese about Catholic social teaching. The statement of purpose was presented “in order that the committee might begin its work”.

The Committee on Labor and Religion is to implement the over all mission of the Human Right Office in promoting human dignity, engaging social systems and increasing understanding of the Catholic Church’s social mission. This committee is to have a focus on promoting the dignity of the working person, on supporting the right of workers to organize and on bringing a greater measure of justice to the workplace.

Included within the purview of the committee is the Church as an economic system. As the American Bishops state in their pastoral letter Economic Justice For All (1986): “All the moral principles that govern the just operation of any economic endeavor apply to the Church and its agencies and institutions; indeed the Church should be exemplary.”

Since Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), the Church has long advocated for the rights of workers and for labor unions. The Committee On Labor And Religion will tap this rich heritage of clergy and laity of the labor movement who have gone before us, will seek to renew relationships with labor leaders who are currently working to bridge issues of faith and justice, and will strive to build new relationships based on this tradition. Within the relationships of labor and management as well as worker and parishioner, much work is to be done.

The specific activities relating to this mission are:

- 1) Development of social policy in response to issues that are brought before the Human Rights Commission.
- 2) Promoting networking among Church and labor leaders.
- 3) Promotion of dialogue among diverse groups on issues of disagreement as they relate to the rights of workers and to the workplace.
- 4) Education of Catholics and others about the Church's tradition of support for workers and for labor unions and about related issues as they are addressed within the context of Catholic social teaching.⁵⁵

It is interesting to note that the importance of education is never far from Shocklee's idea of what is needed for success of a program. He was very aware that Catholic social teaching was neglected by many, if not most, parish priests, and that they, as well as their parishioners needed education about Catholic social teaching. Earlier, it was noted by Bob Kelly that Catholic social teaching as it related to labor was set aside, and that the emphasis is now on abortion.

Although Monsignor Shocklee was a strong supporter of unions and was, in fact, active within the union movement in St. Louis, he was not always in accord with union officials or activities. It is clear that in the case of Hussmann Refrigerator Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Pet, Incorporated, he had mixed feelings.

Hussmann employees were represented by Local 13889 of the Steel Workers Union. In May of 1971, the contract between Hussmann and the union expired, and the union and Hussmann could not agree on a new contract. The workers and the union went on strike. After some time, Hussmann permanently replaced the striking workers.

John was certainly looked upon within the Archdiocese as the Labor Priest, and Bishop Wurm, the Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis, asked him to look into the Hussmann situation. On February 23, 1978, John wrote the following to Bishop Wurm.

Dear Bishop Wurm,

I have been aware of the situation at Hussmann since the strike began. I kept His Eminence also aware of the situation. The most unfortunate result of the confrontation is in men like Mr. DuBois who have given their life to the company and now after 30-40 years of work they find themselves out in the cold.

From my point of view the issues are these:

1. The union is very weak. Several years ago the employees voted to give their decision making power to a small group of union men, about 10 in number. These men are weak and have not done a good job.
2. The company is not a pro-union organization. It has had a long history of right-to-work, John Birch etc. mentality. When the 10 union men could not come to terms, the company fired all employees and hired new people. It is now a non-union company with a staff of about 800.
3. I have talked by phone with the union representative. He is totally inept. I have also talked with the Vice President of Pet Company which is the parent organization. Pet refuses to get involved in problems of their subsidiary organization.

The problem today looks like this. The union is not strong enough to get its men rehired. Management is operating business as usual. Other unions are not overly sympathetic to the employees union at Hussmann.

There is no one available to bring the contestants together to speak about justice to employees, civic pride, etc.

I feel sorry for Mr. DuBois and men his age. They have been hurt. I have volunteered my personal help to the union and management, but they have not accepted it.

Sorry I can't solve the problem for you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Monsignor John A. Shocklee
Executive Director
Commission on Human Rights

John's concern was about the dignity of the worker and the importance of unions as community for labor. He viewed work and the value of the worker from the perspective of Catholic social teaching embedded in the Papal Encyclicals, and the teachings of Christ. He sees the important need to protect labor and to recognize the human value of the worker.

In September of 1982, John sent a letter to all the parishes, asking them to remember the unemployed; 10.8 million, the highest number since 1934. "Our concern

is that the government, the business community and society as a whole recognize the human value of the worker as well as his or her financial contribution to the economy." He mentions Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter on labor, which stresses the paramount importance of the human person in the production/distribution process.

John's contribution to labor was recognized as very significant, and without it Missouri would undoubtedly be a Right-to-Work State, the Chrysler plant would have closed long before it finally did close, and the Farm Workers would not have had the support they gained from their boycotts.

5. Human Rights

The activities of the St. Louis Archdiocese Human Rights Office were a reflection of John Shocklee's view of what human rights entailed. At his death, the obituaries referred to him variously as the civil rights priest, the priest of the poor, or the labor priest, depending on the paper's venue. He was, of course, all of those things and much more. For John Shocklee, human rights was simply Justice for minorities, particularly African Americans, Justice for women, Justice for workers, Justice for the poor, and Justice for prisoners, because for John God and Social Justice are not two different entities. He wrote in a letter to a former student, "God is Justice and when we lose concern for Justice, we lose God."¹ So, for John, to seek and do Justice is to do God's work. Seeking Justice for all who are denied Justice, no matter where, was John Shocklee's all engrossing endeavor in his life as a priest.

It is true that John's name was and is still strongly associated with the African American community. Of his five parish assignments, African American parishioners were a large majority in four of the parishes; St. Leo, St. Bridget, St. Englebert and St. Liborius parishes. Only the parishioners of St. Genevieve du Bois were primarily white. While at St. Leo's he was mentored by Monsignor John Butler, who was well known for his work with the poor, including the African Americans who were his parishioners. There is no doubt that Msgr. Butler was a major influence on John, as John affirmed in interviews, and the experience at St. Leo's helped to form his views of the injustice toward African Americans.

It was, however, his work as Pastor of St. Bridget that forever aliened him with the African American Community, and it was there that he forged his ideas about poverty, prejudice and discrimination. There was no better place to learn about society's lack of concern for African Americans than the infamous housing complex, Pruitt-Igoe, located adjacent to St. Bridget. Many of the families living in Pruitt-Igoe were immigrants from the rural South. John said that many of the

earlier immigrants from Europe came from a Catholic background and found assistance in settling in their new surroundings. The priest would assist in getting the new immigrants settled, and the community generally welcomed them. Msgr. Shocklee said, "There was no one to welcome the migrant Negro, and no one to assist him to adjust to urban ways. I feel the Catholic Church can assume that role for the Negro."² In an interview with the St. Louis Review, Shocklee noted that the Negro population was growing while the white population has been declining. He said, "We must develop a sense of Christian optimism. The increase in Negro population does not mean the decline and fall of the city, but rather it provides a challenge to save more souls. We must know our times. Rather than glory in the past, we must look to our times as they really are and do something about it. Too many pastors and lay people look only as far as their own parish boundaries. But the Catholic Church is more than that. There are no such things as an Irish parish or an Italian parish or a German parish – but rather they are all Catholic parishes and Catholicism extends beyond any artificial unseen boundary lines. We cannot bury our heads in the sand and hope that our fears, real or imagined, will go way. We may have some real fears, but the time has come now to stand up and be counted as true Catholics where the problem of racial bias and bigotry is concerned."³

John was committed to the idea that people should have the power to forge their own destinies. Education, of course, was high on his list of what is needed to obtain power, but participation in their own affairs is also necessary. "People talk about 'Black Power' as if it is a threat to them, but what is Black Power except letting people run their own affairs. Give people some control over their communities and it is a whole new world for them. The people in Pruitt-Igoe can't choose their police or their judges. They're completely powerless in many respects."⁴

John's relations with African Americans extended far beyond his concern for the people in Pruitt-Igoe. An anomaly existed regarding John's attitude toward African Americans. On the one hand he saw African Americans as different – a different Race – but on the other hand they were not different – the same humanity. To John they were his people from his parish – from his country. He was asked by a student archivist, "What advice would you give to future seminarians in their role in race relations and social justice"? John answered, "Make yourself available to people and learn about them, associate with them, be with them. They can teach you a lot of human skills, and they are sensitive and can spot a phony – they know when they are being pushed off."⁵ As Joe Wiley stated in an interview, "John was not white, he was not black, he was just human." John did not view his accomplishments as helping African Americans, but rather he believed that his most enduring accomplishment was making an impression on black and white relations.⁶ Certainly, he viewed his work as Pastor of St. Genevieve du Bois as part of that accomplishment. Progress resulting from his efforts is seen in the following: In a meeting with some Catholic women who wanted John to speak on race and civil rights, John said, "One of the things that came out of the meeting was how anti-black they were – you could tell by the questions they asked. About five years later they listened to a tape that was made of that meeting and they didn't like what they heard – they didn't like themselves."⁷ "People think I ought to talk about race. But I don't think it's a matter of black and white. The problem today is not race. It is simply that people are poor. He suggested that many of the affluent people are really poor. They have the opportunity to help, but lack the compassion. They think that they're being generous when they give their cleaning woman old clothes, but what about her ruined budget when her pay is docked due to illness? The affluent don't look at this situation from the other person's shoes."⁸

Although it is true that John believed that the problem is "simply that people are poor", his major reference point was the African American community in St. Louis. When he wrote of being poor in St. Louis, there can be little doubt that he was speaking on behalf of all poor people, but especially the poor in his parish, African Americans. He was passionate about the lack of morality shown by society's failure to adequately address the problems of poverty. Of the poor, he said, "We are all responsible for them – what happens to \$350 a month income when the rent is \$100 and the heat bill is \$100? That leaves \$150 for everything else that month, yet there is a common attitude that subsidy for the poor, even giving them food to eat, is somehow inherently wrong. A subsidy system that helps almost every level of American economic life while excluding or limiting help for the poor and starving reflects a gross disorder of values in our society."⁹

John pursued the idea of providing food for the poor by supporting neighborhood food pantries and organizations that were established to provide food for the poor. An important outcome resulting from his efforts was the establishment of what has become the St. Louis Area Food Bank. He contacted Mr. Bob Krekeler, an executive of a food distributor company, and they founded a Food Crisis Network. They set up warehouses, and because of Mr. Krekeler's contacts in the food industry, they were able to get help from food retailers and manufacturers to serve a network of food pantries.

As the Director of the Human Rights Commission, John was very influential throughout the archdiocese, and he used his influence to encourage parishes to participate in various programs established to serve the poor. The following letter sent to all parish priests in the St. Louis Archdiocese is an example of his work in this area.

Dear Father,

Two themes of the Scriptures are: feed the hungry and bring justice to the poor. It is important that Christians have a channel through which they can work to bring justice in our world. Bread for the

World is a national Christian citizen's movement that seeks to achieve these ends by influencing public policy and our individual life styles.

One of the channels through which Christians can become involved is Bread for the World. In the St. Louis Metropolitan area, over 300 members are informing people about the problems of poverty and hunger, keeping in contact with legislators and much more.

Each fall, Bread for the World across the nation targets a specific issue and activity that aims at affecting public policy. This is accomplished by a nation wide letter writing campaign by Christians called an "Offering of Letters".

This year the "Offering of Letters" all focus on President Carter and will seek to urge him to develop proposals that will begin to get at the root causes of poverty and hunger around the globe: 1) a new set of trade relations between developed and developing countries; 2) reforms within rich and poor countries that would aim at alleviating poverty.

Each and every Christian will be asked to write President Carter and urge him to formulate such proposals. We are inviting you to support this work of justice, to encourage your people to write, and to use this Offering in the context of your parish.

On the back are listed several persons whom you can contact for assistance. Please do not hesitate to contact them.

Sincerely in Christ,
Monsignor John A. Shocklee¹⁰

John railed at the government because of programs that failed to provide adequately for the needs of the poor, particularly the black poor. These were programs across the board that included assisted housing, assistance for families with dependent children (AFDC), and food stamps. "Someday take the time to drop by the city food stamp office. It is a place in a drab, converted warehouse with offices so dirty and shabby that you have to feel you are 'dirt' too just for being there. Everything there – the vandalized front door with a crude 'Food Stamp Office' sign on it, the dirty waiting room, the tattered and yellowed U.S.D.A. posters scotch taped to the wall telling you about 'Justice for All' and even the ancient clock on the wall running six hours fast – is an affront to common sense and dignity.

There is a common opinion that welfare and, in particular, food stamps, are being used by people who do not deserve to receive them, because they are defrauding the system, or because they are unwilling to work, that a large portion of the food stamps go to people who are cheating the government. There is a prevailing attitude that people who need help to face up to the economics of staying alive somehow are normally and socially deficient. The whole process of getting food stamps is a humiliating ordeal designed to let the applicant know the contemptible place society accords him. To get food stamps takes 30 days for certification and then the stamps that are made available are based on the principle that up to 30 percent of household income should be spent on food. The result is a syndrome of living hand to mouth, perpetuated by a conscious effort to, first, humiliate applicants for assistance and, second, to provide food assistance which many times is at a semi-starvation level."¹¹

John did not only bring the government to task for its failures, he also reflected on the past and present failures of the Church in the area of Social Justice and Human Rights. He constantly urged the Bishops and clergy to take stands in matters of prejudice, discrimination, and social justice. A recommendation addressed to Archbishop John May, Archbishop of St. Louis, by

the Human Rights Office for an Affirmative action Plan for the Archdiocese is an example of John's persistence in such matters.

"The Church in St. Louis, as elsewhere in the country, cannot point to a spotless record in the area of discrimination. As just one example of discrimination, racially based discrimination was standard policy in the Archdiocese until the second half of this century. Black children were forced to attend segregated Catholic schools; Black patients were required to seek care in separate Catholic medical facilities; young Black men were advised to seek seminary training elsewhere; Black lay persons were permitted to join only Black fraternal organizations; Black applicants to religious life were directed to Black religious orders; finally, Black people were seldom, if ever, employed by the Church in professional level positions.

The effects of discrimination still linger on in the Archdiocese. At present, the Church in St. Louis has but three permanently stationed Black priests; the lay professional staffs of the Archdiocesan high schools have less than 20 Blacks among their members (which total almost 500); no major Archdiocesan department is headed by a black person; only one Black (a recent appointee) sits on the Archdiocesan Development Council; few Black individuals serve the Church in non-school, professional level positions; youth ministry efforts in the Archdiocese, in the opinion of many, undertake a minimum of programming directed toward Black youth. What is true for Blacks is also true for others who have suffered discrimination – i.e., other racial and ethnic groups, handicapped, women, and the aged.

If these and other consequences of discrimination are to be corrected, a concerted effort – touching all portions of the Archdiocesan system –must be begun.”

Nor will it be sufficient only to call for an end to discrimination. Certainly, that must be done. But if the Church's efforts stop there, it will fail to live up to the demands of social justice, that concept of right conduct which calls for the alteration of social structures and behaviors which are inherently unethical. In a similar vain, the Church's moral tradition has consistently pointed to the “obligation of restitution” (i.e. the moral requirement of compensation for past wrongs by means of present and future acts of restitution). Finally, civil society, in its legal codes, promotes a notion of “corrective justice” whereby the victims of past discrimination are afforded a special treatment in order to equalize their status with that of those citizens who have not suffered discrimination. These three ethical tenets --- social justice, the obligation of restitution and corrective justice – suggest that the Archdiocese must undertake a forceful, concerted program whlch will elimlnate discrimination and, at the same time, actively promote the further incorporation of those groups and classes previously discriminated against. A most logical means of accomplishing this, a means called for by the American hierarchy, is the implementation of an Archdiocesan-wide Affirmative Action plan.

The development of an Affirmative Action plan offers the Church in St. Louis an opportunity to exercise genuine moral leadership. By voluntarily undertaking such an effort (rather than doing so as a result of the coercion of civil law, public embarrassment, or the possible loss of public funds), the Archdiocese will go on record not simply as an opponent of prejudice, but as a proponent of justice.

The Church's credibility as a prophetic community, one which sees as part of its Baptismal mission the necessity of lovingly calling our sisters and brothers to lives of justice, will be enhanced greatly. But most importantly, the implementation of a substantive Affirmative Action plan will be a major step toward redressing the wrongs of the past and reconciling the divisions which presently ravage our Church and our society. To refrain from such an opportunity is to delay the building up of Christ's body.¹²

John was always promoting the need for greater understanding of black Catholics and the history of African American Catholics in St. Louis. He approached William Barnaby Faherty, a renowned Jesuit author, with a suggestion for a history of African American Catholics in St. Louis. Faherty was interested and John secured a grant to support the research. The result was the publication in 1977 of The Religious Roots of Black Catholics of Saint Louis, written by William Barnaby Faherty and Madeline Barni Oliver. In a letter to the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Jean Jadot, John discusses the importance of young priests understanding minorities within the Catholic Church.

"It was a pleasure to speak with you briefly several times at Bishop McNamara's ordination in Grand Island. I am enclosing a booklet prepared by Fr. Faherty of St. Louis University at our suggestion. It is the first step in an effort to show the contributions of Black Catholics in St. Louis to the Archdiocese. The Black people who have read the book are delighted that someone in the Church has given them this public recognition.

There is a great need for priests in ministry with minorities to share their experiences, clearly state their goals and objectives. The NOBC (National Office of Black Catholics) has attempted this, but the absence of a director for such a long period has left us floundering. The result is a growing lack of interest in minorities on

the part of young priests, and those who have been involved for years are showing signs of fatigue.

I thank you for your public statements about the role of the Church with the Black community and the poor. I do hope that our paths cross in the future.

In Christ,

Msgr. John A. Shocklee"¹³

John was persistent in his efforts to provide greater participation in the Church for African Americans, and consistently argued for more African American support by priests, more African American seminarians, more African American priests, and more African Americans in positions of authority in the St. Louis Archdiocese. On October 8, 1981, John wrote to Archbishop John L. May advising him that the Commission On Human Rights had voted unanimously to recommend the appointment of a Black auxiliary bishop to the Archdiocese.

" The Commission Is aware that the Archdiocese has only 3 Black priests. This Is a regrettable commentary on a St. Louis city and county which together have about 250,000 Black residents, of which 30,000 are Catholic. Despite this poor showing, St. Louis still has a higher percentage of Black Catholics than New York or Philadelphia. Moreover, the Archdiocese is respected by the Catholic and non-Catholic Black people.

There are instances of surprising creativity taking place in the Black areas of the city. A few are the new life at St. Barbara's church, the MAT Social Ministry at St. Teresa's, St. Matthews, St. Alphonsus, and Cardinal Ritter College Prep is a model to the entire country.

As the Church in St. Louis looks to the future, it would be well to have a Black auxiliary bishop lending increased credibility to the mission of the Church.

Sincerely in Christ,

Msgr. John A. Shockee.¹⁴

Several people interviewed said that everyone thought that Monsignor Shocklee would be made a bishop. An article in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat stated, "The choice of a new auxiliary bishop is expected to be announced, and frequently mentioned for the position, in Catholic circles, is Monsignor John Shocklee."¹⁵ Father William Barnaby Faherty, S.J. expressed the view that John was offered the position of bishop but turned it down in favor of having a Black bishop. He said that he had no evidence that Msgr. Shocklee had the opportunity to become a bishop, but he had a strong feeling that that was the case. Bishop Edward O'Donnell indicated that he also thought many people believed that John would be made a bishop. He said that John made effective use of church power, and that he had a key to problems other people were not able to solve. He once said that Msgr. Shocklee was a charismatic priest "who quietly challenged his brothers and sisters in the Church to live their commitment to justice".¹⁶ Whether John turned down the position for himself is not important. It was known that John was promoting the idea that the Archdiocese have a Black bishop. He believed there was a definite need for a Black bishop in an archdiocese with thirty thousand African American Catholics. On February 10, 1984, James Terry Steib, S.V.D. was ordained Auxiliary Bishop by Archbishop John L. May, and was the first African American Bishop for the St. Louis Archdiocese. One can be almost certain that John was involved in the selection of Steib, as he was very often involved in recommending priests for parish appointments and for church

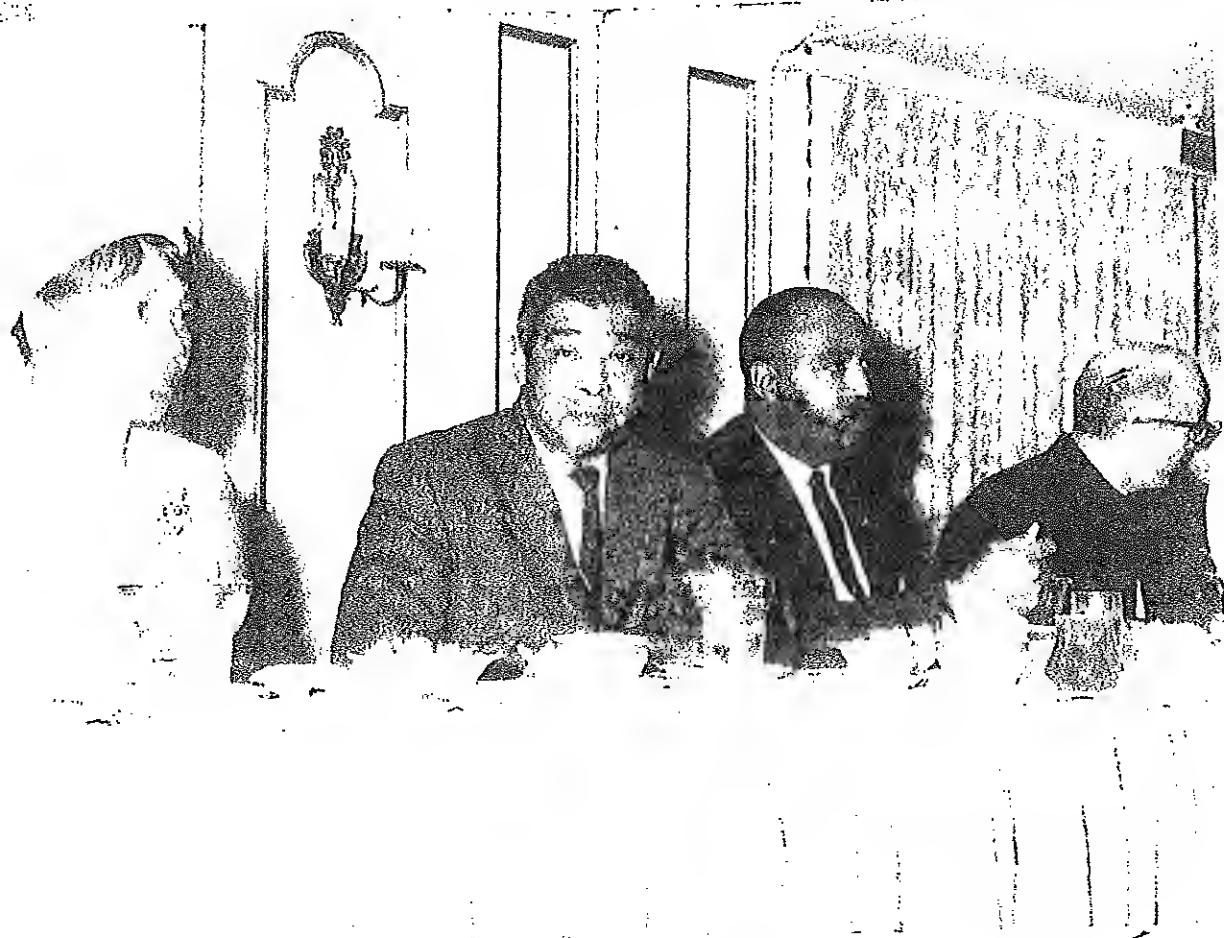
closings. His concern was always on the effect such appointments or church closings would make on the African American community,

Church policy matters were very important to John, because stated policy mirrors the concerns of the Church. He often wrote to dioceses leadership commenting on policy, and the Archbishops also often sought his opinions. For example, he wrote a letter to Archbishop May opposing a "Faith Test" for grantees requesting grants from the Campaign for Human Development. "Most poor are Black and most Blacks are non-Catholic. A "Faith Test" will make the campaign impossible to administer."¹⁷ He made many recommendations for Black parishioners to obtain jobs or promotions within the archdiocese, as well as recommendations to corporations and government, especially to city government.

John's opposition to prejudice and discrimination was not limited to his concern for African Americans. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, and in 1983, with five other religious leaders, denounced the persecution of members of the Bahai faith in Iran. In a letter to Msgr. Robert Shaheen of St. Raymond's parish in St. Louis, he indicated his concern about prejudice against the Lebanese and Syrian communities.¹⁸ His concern and support for Mexican and other Central American people is evident in his work with the farm workers and his support of the sanctuary movement. His motivation, as always, is Justice for all people. "We must destroy the walls of prejudice that have existed for too many years, and promote interracial understanding by building bridges between Blacks and Whites."¹⁹

Monsignor Shocklee was not only interested in policy matters within the church, but he was also an activist priest. He joined the NAACP and the Urban League, and served on NAACP Committees. John was on the Executive Committee of the NAACP and he served as the Chairman of St. Louis City

Family Services. He allowed Black organizations not generally accepted as legitimate by the status quo, such as the Black Liberators and the Turks, to meet in the church basement.²⁰ In August of 1963, John "joined local church leaders, Teamster representatives, and CORE members in a two day trip to march in Washington for jobs and freedom.²¹ Two days later, he was involved with CORE in the historic Jefferson Bank demonstrations.



1964 NAACP Annual Dinner. Father Shocklee can be seen on the far right.

Father Shocklee was one of several priests, ministers, and Rabbi's of St. Louis who led a large contingent of people in the Selma march of 1965. He led eight busloads of 56 priests, nuns, students and lay people, women and men religious, and joined thousands of people from all over the country in a march to end segregation.²² John asked for and got permission from Cardinal Ritter to include two Sisters of Loretto to join him for the Selma march. "When Father Francis Doyle, executive secretary of the St. Louis Archdiocesan Commission on Human Rights, proposed the trip to Selma, one of the first to join him was Father John Shocklee of a St. Louis parish. He offered to bring with him two Sisters of Loretto who lived in an inner city apartment with some of their students. Therese Stawowy, then Sister Ann Christopher, was teaching an undergraduate course in Sociology at Webster College, and Christine Nava, then Sister Christine Mary, was the librarian."²³ On March 10, 1965, the day that the St. Louis contingent arrived in Selma, Rev. James Reeb, a Unitarian Minister from Boston died. He was severely beaten by segregationists the day before. The Sisters had been warned that there was danger involved in a civil rights march in the South, and Rev. Reeb's death was certainly a confirmation of the warning. The local Archbishop, Archbishop Thomas J. Toolen, forbade the Religious of the Mobile-Birmingham Archdiocese to be participants in the demonstrations. Referring to Catholic nuns and priests who went to Selma, he said, "Certainly the sisters are out of place in these demonstrations. Their place is at home, doing God's work. I would say the same thing is true of the priests."²⁴

Although the matter at hand was a march for civil rights, an equally important aspect was the impact made by the nuns marching against the orders of the local Archbishop. This was the time of Vatican II and *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World), and the fight for equal rights by the Feminist Movement. These sisters were in the vanguard of change within the Church, and within the world of women's religious orders. Attitudes of nuns and other religious

women began to change toward more radical positions (at least in the eyes of the all male hierarchy).

Priests, too, were seeking changes, particularly priests who worked in poor parishes and priests working in the black communities. On March 8, just two days before John arrived in Selma, he attended a meeting in Chicago at the invitation of Father Thomas Carroll. The priests met as "the Priests' Rights Committee", and they were concerned with their lack of opportunities to work in the civil rights movement. Clergy of other faiths were working in opposition to Southern injustice, and the 24 priests attending the Chicago meeting were to discuss "how the Church might witness her concern and Christ's concern for the Negro". The committee concluded that: "The result of this multifold scandal was threefold: opportunities for ecumenical cooperation were sharply reduced, white Catholics remained indifferent to the issue of racial injustice, and the African American community continued to regard the Catholic Church as a pawn of the status quo".²⁵

That Father Shocklee was already recognized as a priest involved in the interracial movement within the Catholic Church is evident by the fact that Father Carroll sent Invitations to only twenty-nine priests involved in the movement. John's work with the African American community at St. Bridget had gained wide recognition in St. Louis and around the country. He was one of the 24 who responded to Father Carroll's invitation, so the discussions in Chicago were fresh in his mind when he arrived in Selma. Nevertheless, the experience of Selma had a lasting effect on him. He became totally knowledgeable about the work of Martin Luther King. He called him, "An Old Testament prophet in modern dress, and he said; "Have we heard the prophetic voice of Martin Luther King? If we have greater respect for the divinity of every human being, we have heard him. If we have great hope for the future of our country, we have heard him. If we have stripped our hearts of all bitterness, our minds of all revenge, then fortunately we have listened to the prophetic voice of Martin Luther King."²⁶

John became St. Louis' strongest supporter of King. After Dr. King's assassination, he is attributed with cooling the demonstrations in St. Louis, and forestalling expected violence, which occurred in many other cities, when Dr. King was assassinated. "Monsignor repeated Dr. King's message that violence will get us nowhere. Violence only perpetuates hatred, the evil of racism, and more violence."²⁷ He actively promoted Dr. Martin Luther Day in St. Louis by writing to all newspapers, radio and television stations encouraging observance publicity. Monsignor Shocklee established the Mass to honor Martin Luther King on April 4, the day of his assassination. He invited Cardinal Carberry to attend the Mass at St. Bridget, and he promoted the Mass honoring Dr. King on Martin Luther King Day. He continued to approach the archbishops of the St. Louis Diocese on racial issues and issues that would affect the poor, during his entire tenure as a priest.

John was recognized by the people of St. Louis as a leader in the area of race relations. An article by Sylvester Brown Jr. about an interdenominational group, the Metropolitan Church Federation, stated about John, "One of the shining stars of the federation's mission was the late Monsignor John A. Shocklee. He served as pastor of St. Bridget Catholic Church from 1961 to 1976. The church was adjacent to the housing projects. Before earning the title 'the Pruitt-Igoe priest'. Shocklee took busloads of priests, nuns, students and laypeople to support Dr. Martin Luther King's 1965 protest march in Selma, Alabama. The man described in the Post-Dispatch in those days as the 'tall, vigorous priest' used faith, passion and his bully pulpit to nudge those professing Christianity to put hard work behind their words of faith."²⁸ Without a doubt, John was an admirer of Martin Luther King, and he was forever remembered for the Selma march.

On August 30, 1963, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) targeted the Jefferson Bank and Trust Company of St. Louis for their failure to provide equal employment opportunities to African Americans. At that time, the bank employed over 500 people, but only 35 were African American and none held management

management positions. There was one African American teller. CORE requested that the bank employ at least four more black tellers. "The bank's president said that blacks did not know how to do the work." Shocklee, who had been requested by CORE to intervene, said that the Urban League had trained people to do the job.²⁹ "Father Shocklee had been assigned to a church near the Jefferson Bank at the time of the demonstrations, and he became acquainted with Percy Green, Ivory Perry, and other CORE activists at that time. He saw that his parishioners liked the very qualities that got civil rights demonstrators criticism from the press. Community people felt pride in the ability of demonstrators to command so much attention from the power elite, and they admired the ingenuity they displayed in the process. As long as the issues dramatized real problems facing the community, and as long as the activists retained personal credibility as sincere and dedicated individuals, bad publicity did not hurt them. As Shocklee remembers, 'They were unusual leaders because even when the press tried to harm them with bad publicity, the people never really did believe it, because they were not bad guys'.³⁰ At the time of Msgr. Shocklee's death, former congressman William Clay recalled "standing shoulder to shoulder with the priest in 1963 during the Jefferson Bank boycott, demanding that the bank hire more blacks. Clay said, "He was one of the few clerics who was not afraid to speak out on the issue of racism".³¹ Clay said that Shocklee was instrumental in getting the march from 12th street to the city jail and making it successful. After the march, Churches, including the Catholic Church, marched from Soldiers Memorial to the old Court House.³² The protests that started on August 30, 1963, continued until March of 1964, when CORE claimed victory. The Jefferson Bank protests changed the tenor of race relations in St. Louis forever. Employment opportunities improved as barriers began to fall. Even before the protests ended, Jefferson Bank had employed six additional black tellers. The protests took the form of marches, pickets, and even disrupting the banks business by groups



Monsignor Shocklee with Percy Green, member of CORE and Founder of the civil rights group "Action".

going to the bank for minimal transaction such as seeking change for bills and crowding the entrance to the bank. One very important aspect of the demonstrations was the almost total support of the African American community, including doctors, lawyers, teachers, African American ministers, and the black press. Twelve prominent attorneys joined the defense team, including several that later became well known nationally, like Federal Court of Appeals Justice Clyde Cahill, and former National Chairwoman of the NAACP, Margaret Bush Wilson. During an interview about his book on the Jefferson Bank demonstrations, Bob Joiner asked Clay how he would sum up the demonstrations. Clay said, "During the Jefferson Bank demonstrations, we were up against the whole power structure and the black leadership that it could influence. We had to fight that for 3 and ½ years. What helped us was that the black community, the rank and file black community, rose up and sided with the demonstrators, not just on Jefferson Bank but at the department stores, bread companies, insurance companies and a lot of other places. We took all of them on. We were successful also because the black ministers sided with us; the black press sided with us. The white press was terrible. Their reports were inaccurate and biased. And you'll notice in the book that I have no nice things to say about them or about the black leadership that tried to undermine the movement."³³

Bill Clay, a member of the St. Louis Board of Aldermen at that time was one of the protesters arrested. Clay and Robert Curtis, the St. Louis CORE Chairman, received the stiffest sentences. They were found guilty by Judge Michael Scott of conspiracy and willful disobedience, refused bond and sentenced to 270 days in jail and fined \$1000 each. The case went through the courts to the United States Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, where their sentences were affirmed. The United States Supreme Court refused to hear the case. Clay and Curtis were paroled by Judge Scott after serving 105 days of their 270 day sentence.

Father Shocklee and his parishioners at St. Bridget supported the protests in every way they could. They marched, they picketed, and they comforted other

protesters who came their way on Jefferson Avenue. John's participation encouraged other Catholic clergy, nuns, and laymen to support the protests. However, not all of the Catholic clergy were in favor of the protests or of CORE. Monsignor Patrick Malloy, noted for his work in the African American community, opposed the Church's participation in the Jefferson Bank protests and was opposed to CORE. John often worked behind the scenes to forward the interests of the African American community. He was pleased with the outcome of the protests and in an interview with a student archivist he said, "Jefferson Bank was one that we won, because they began to hire black people. This was a good thing for the city of St. Louis. The whole Civil Rights Movement did not work out the way some people thought it would – what's good, what's bad - because we had some rough times. The KKK was almost dead until the Civil Rights Movement – so you pay a price – but paying the price if the price is worth it."³⁴

Although the struggle and win with the Jefferson Bank was an important victory for the African American Community, a much longer and equally important struggle culminated in a serious loss. Healthcare was one of John's major concerns, along with employment and education. The major provider of health services to the African American Community was Homer G. Phillips Hospital located in the historic black area of St. Louis called The Ville. Homer G. Phillips Hospital was a major source of pride and stability in the African American Community. It provided a place for Black doctors to intern and a training school for nurses and technicians. It was nationally recognized for its excellence and ranked in the upper third of the ten largest general hospitals in the United States.

Homer G. Phillips was named after an outstanding citizen and Civil Rights advocate who was assassinated on June 18, 1931, at 51 years of age. Homer G. Phillips was a prominent lawyer and a leader in the efforts of the community to create a full service hospital to serve African Americans. Their efforts finally bore fruit with the opening of the new hospital in 1937. It came into being because blacks were tired of their tax dollars going to support white hospitals where black

doctors and nurses could not be trained, and because the segregated black facilities were overcrowded and inadequately funded.

Although the hospital was an important black hospital and provided employment for hundreds of African American health employees, and had a nursing school and a place for black doctors to train, there was a constant struggle to keep the doors open. "Efforts to close the facility were led by numerous politicians, the two local medical schools, the publishers and editors of daily newspapers, and downtown financial leaders."³⁵ Both Washington University and St. Louis University provided staff for Homer G. Phillips and City Hospital. Homer G. obtained interns and residents from Meharry and Howard Universities, as well as from some foreign universities.

Mayor James Conway served from 1977 to 1981, and throughout his term of office the plight of Homer G. Phillips was a matter of concern among the African American Community. Conway appointed a committee to study the possibility of a merger of City Hospital One and Homer G. Phillips. A special Aldermanic Committee found that six of the thirteen members of the Mayor's Committee appear to have had a conflict of interest; they were also members of the Board of Health and Hospitals. All the members of the mayor's task force were supporters of his election campaign and were all members of the medical staffs of either Washington University or St. Louis University. Actions of this sort by Mayor Conway caused blacks to fear that he intended to close Homer G. Finally he consolidated the two hospitals and moved all patients to City One in South St. Louis, leaving two hundred thousand blacks in North St. Louis without adequate healthcare.

Monsignor Shocklee strongly supported keeping Homer G. Phillips Hospital open. The following Memo of December 28, 1979 to Cardinal Carberry is indicative of Shocklee's concern and position.

Your Eminence,

I would like to keep you aware of movements of the black community at the present time.

The major problem now is health care in North St. Louis. I am enclosing a list of facts about the need for better health care, which I will be willing to discuss with you at any time. There is an effort of Church people to review the healthcare situation. Sr. Kathleen Crowley from our office and I have been present at these meetings. The Methodists, Episcopallans and Jewish Rabbis have approved position papers (attached). We have not made a public statement, mainly because of the DePaul Hospital situation. The time might be right for the Commission on Human Rights to prepare a statement that we could defend. The North St. Louis Community is hurt and offended by Mayor Conway's decision to close Homer G. Phillips. In the hospital matter, St. Louis University Medical School is constantly subject to criticism. I would feel much better if I knew the truth about St. Louis University Medical School's involvement.

St. Louis University is in charge of staffing at City Hospital #1. A senior medical student is in charge of admissions. Quite frequently a referral from the clinic and/or emergency room doctor at Homer G. Phillips is turned away by the young medical student. There is documented evidence that one patient, rejected by the St. Louis University medical student, was returned 12 hours later as D.O.A.

There is an interlocking arrangement between the City, St. Louis University and City Hospital #1 (See appendix #1). I cannot do anything about it, but I feel you should be informed. (the appendix contains statements calling for the reopening of Homer G. Phillips as an acute care hospital from The Presbytery of Elijah Parish Lovejoy, The Episcopal Diocese of Missouri, The St. Louis Rabbinical Association, and the United Methodist Church, North District Council of Ministries).

As indicted above, protestant ministers and Jewish Rabbis and their respective religious governing bodies joined John. The following from the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri Annual Convention, Dec. 1979, reflects the tenor of the St. Louis Rabbinical Association, The Presbytery of Elijah Parish Lovejoy, and the United Methodist Church, North District Council on Ministries.

Concerning the reopening of Homer G. Phillips Hospital in the city of St. Louis. Submitted by: The Urban Policy and Mission Department.

1. WHEREAS we are called by the Gospel to bring comfort to the suffering and to heal the sick; and
2. WHEREAS the need for medical care for the poor, for the aged, and for the Black community in the city of St. Louis is of shocking proportions:
 - the black death rate in the city remains 60% above the national average.
 - St. Louis has the second highest overall infant mortality rate in the country.
 - St. Louis is number one in lead poisoning cases amongst all people.
 - St. Louis is number four in influenza and pneumonia deaths.
3. WHEREAS the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has determined that in the census tracts covering North St. Louis there is existing a critical shortage of medical manpower which leaves the area in North St. Louis underserved, according to the greater Health Systems Agency of St. Louis; and
4. WHEREAS there is one acute care hospital in North St. Louis, St. Luke's, to serve a population of 203, 199, while there are eleven hospitals in South St. Louis to serve a population of 304,798; and

5. WHEREAS 75% of the population served by the municipal acute care hospitals live in postal zip codes of North St. Louis; and
6. WHEREAS the current consolidation does not in any way alleviate the above problems; now therefore be it
7. RESOLVED that this 140th convention of the Diocese of Missouri go on record in calling for the immediate re-opening of Homer G. Hospital as a full acute care service hospital; and be it further
8. RESOLVED that this convention urge the city of St. Louis to take immediate steps to establish a new centrally located medical center which will provide primary as well as full acute care service for its entire population of the city, especially for the Black, poor and aged community; and be it further
9. RESOLVED that the Urban Team be charged with monitoring the above resolution.

Cardinal Carberry sided with the Mayor, and in a Memo dated January 17, 1980, he stated that Mayor Conway opposed the opening again of Homer G. Phillips as a full time hospital and that the Mayor regretted the actions of various religious leaders who supported the opening of Homer G.. Conway had received a report from H.E.W., which indicated that in the census tracts covering North St. Louis there exists a critical shortage of medical personnel, which leaves the area underserved. In a letter to Carberry, Conway explains that "This designation (medically underserved) refers to a deficiency in numbers of physicians providing care through their private offices, clinics, etc., Therefore, it has no relationship to presence or absence of hospitals, but is mainly relevant to the provision of ambulatory outpatient care."³⁶ Tom Nolan stated in an Interview " Cardinal Carberry supported Mayor James Conway in closing Homer G. Phillips Hospital but John opposed the closing. The mayor came to talk with Cardinal Carberry

and John was called to the Cardinal's office. Mayor Conway chewed John up and the Cardinal did not support John.³⁷

On April 3, 1981, the Human Rights Office issued an Information Bulletin entitled Summary of the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Report on H. G. Phillips Hospital. The closing of Homer G. Phillips Hospital discriminated against the residents of North St. Louis, according to a report released on January 16, 1981, by the Office For Civil Rights of the Department of Health and Human Services, formerly HEW. The report concluded an investigation conducted by the OCR in response to two complaints made to HEW in 1979 alleging that by consolidating the two city hospitals, the civil rights of black St. Louisans were violated.

The OCR investigation concentrated on two questions:

1. Had the City Department of Health and Hospitals, found guilty of racial discrimination in 1966, taken appropriate action to reverse the effects of that discrimination
2. Did the closing of Phillips hospital's acute care facilities create a problem of access to health care and, if so, did greater access problems result for minority residents than for white St. Louisans.

By operating two hospitals—Starkoff Memorial(City #1) and Homer G. Phillips --- with segregated facilities, the City of St. Louis in 1966 was found to be in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1961. As a result of that finding, the City had the responsibility to take action to reverse the effects of that history of discrimination within the hospital system. A March 5, 1979, complaint to HEW by Legal Services of Eastern Missouri argues that the decision to keep Starkoff open and close Phillips was a direct result of a historic pattern of discrimination that continued after 1966.

The OCR found that despite the city's obligation to act to rectify the inequality between the two hospitals, "Phillips was never fully integrated into the city's health-care system." Instead, the medical staffs of the two hospitals remained separate while the city permitted the medical schools of St. Louis University and Washington University to affiliate only with Starkoff. Not only did the patients at Starkoff Memorial receive the benefits of university medical personnel, but university affiliation led to the development of several specialty medical units that were not available to Phillips.

DRAMATIC FINDINGS

One of the OCR's most dramatic findings was that between 1965 and 1978, Homer G. Phillips hospital received an average of \$675,650 less per year for its operating budget than did Starkoff Memorial. And that figure did not include money provided to Starkoff through the medical school affiliations, having systematically allowed Homer G. Phillips to fall behind Starkoff, the city then argues for consolidation in 1979, citing the lack of facilities and medical school affiliations at HGP.

In the second area of its investigation, spurred by a complaint lodged by the ad hoc Committee to save Homer G. Phillips that the civil rights of black people were being denied by the closing of HGP hospital, the OCR found that access to inpatient hospital care was in effect being denied to North St. Louis residents due to the problem of travelling to Starkoff. The distance to the area of the city previously served by Homer G. Phillips to Starkoff Memorial was especially difficult to traverse, noted the OCR report, for those who had to rely either on taxi service or public transportation.

An average round trip taxi ride to Starkloff cost \$9.40, while one way trip by bus took over an hour, twice as long as a trip to HGP and in violation of the 30-minute Federal Accessibility standard. Although the city does offer a van service, the OCR found it inadequate to relieve the problem of transportation since its use required an advance notice of 24 hours.

A further problem of access cited by the OCR was the fact that 29% of the patients referred by the HGP's staff for admission to Starkloff were denied hospital admission by the medical staff at Starkloff Memorial during one period since consolidation.

Not only did the closing of HGP hospital limit access to hospital care, the OCR found that minority residents were more likely to encounter access problems than were white St. Louisans. To quote from the report: the "OCR has determined that actual admission of displaced Homer G. Phillips patients to existing acute-care facilities are far below what is expected. Of the approximately 988 patients 'missing' in the patient census counts for the first quarter of 1980, 939 were black and 49 were white."³⁸

James Conway lost his bid for reelection in 1981 to Vincent Schoemehl as a result of his closing Homer G. Phillips and Schoemehl's promise to reopen the hospital. According to Bill Clay, "Mayor Schoemehl attempted to honor his promise to reopen HGP but was defeated in his effort by black leaders associated with the former mayor. When Schoemehl made his commitment to reopen the hospital, it was not known that Conway had surrendered the hospital license to the state and to the federal government. Now reopening it was no longer a matter of an executive order by the new mayor. Schoemehl was forced to apply for a new license, which required compliance with all recently imposed

legal regulations, rules and laws.”³⁹ Homer G. Phillips is now the Homer G. Phillips senior center and is operated by Homer G. Phillips Limited Partnership, with a 99-year lease.

Although an obedient son of the Church, there were times when John disagreed with the institutional church. After the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act, he was at odds with the Mid-town Redevelopment Corporations activities in the Tiffany, Terry Park, Compton and Grand neighborhoods. The Mid-Town Redevelopment Corporation was St. Louis University. The Human Rights Office opposed the manner the city was using community development block grants. They stated, “Community Development Block Grants were created to revitalize communities and improve housing for low-income people, but poor targeting standards, local ineffectiveness implementing the program, and decision making based on political considerations rather than human need have weakened the effectiveness of the program.

In general, block grants have failed to meet their objectives. Federal funds have been substituted for local money to sustain existing programs rather than develop new ones, benefits have been redirected from the poor to the more idle classes, accountability has been weak and civil rights and citizen participation have not been enforced.

It was natural for John to be on the side of women in their struggles for justice and equal rights. After all, this was a man who believed that God must have loved his mother, because he gave her 10 children; a priest who never missed an opportunity to remark on his mother, as he did in his very first homily at Saint Genevieve du Bois when he opened by stating how his mother always asked why he was never assigned a parish west of Kingshighway, and then said “well Ma, here I am”. His work with nuns is particularly noteworthy. Nuns made up the core of Project Contact, which was so important in his work at St. Bridget. He worked with nuns on many projects and supported nuns in any way possible. He worried about the continued loss of teaching nuns in the Catholic Schools,

particularly those of North St. Louis. The Human Rights Office had an outreach program on prostitution and was in support of Sister Agnes Marce Baer who was assigned to that project. Father Rich Creason said that John gave assistance to Sister Agnes in her work with prostitutes. John was also supportive of Sister Catherine Durr, CSJ and her Outpatient Chemical Dependency Program. Sister Durr was the president of St. Joseph Hospital in Kirkwood, Missouri. He supported Katherine Dunham and presented her with a statement of support from the Commission On Human Rights for her fast in protest of the U.S. Policy calling for repatriation of thousands of Haitian refugees. The statement urges Catholics and others to fast one day a week in support of Dunham's protest.⁴⁰

Monsignor Shocklee supported the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), while Archbishop May was apposed. On January 29, 1982, John wrote the following Memo to Archbishop May:

I want you to know that the subject of the Equal Rights Amendment has been submitted to the Commission on Human Rights for discussion. Our normal process is to get information about both sides of an issue and then act on it. At last Monday's meeting, we had Dr. Lawrence O'Connell, dean of the Theology Department of St. Louis University, and a lawyer, Mr. Toby Hollander, presenting theological and legal implications of the amendment.

Last February in your column in the St. Louis Review, you presented your viewpoints on the subject. If you have a problem with the possibility that the Commission members would move to support of the ERA, please let me know as soon as possible. We do not want to take a stance in opposition to you.

My personal interest in the topic comes from strong opinions of members of the Black community who look on opposition to the ERA as another governmental effort to keep them in their place.⁴¹

In response to John's Memo, the Archbishop indicated that he would follow the official stand of the Conference of Catholic Bishops, which was in opposition to the ERA. The Archbishop went on to say, "I have read the enclosure you sent by attorney Joan Krauskopf and it is not that convincing in my judgment. I also questioned very much the survey report she refers to with regard to the citizens of Missouri. We all know that surveys can indicate many things depending on how the question is asked."

"I do not believe the feeling you mention in the Black community is validly based and I think that point should be made. It would be rash in my opinion to take this action because of a very questionable perception in the Black community."

"Finally I do believe that it is too late for ERA. I think a stand by the Human Rights Commission at this time for ratification would be of no avail and would probably stir up all kinds of flack on the part of many people who would otherwise be cooperative and supportive of much of your work. I do not believe it would help very much toward unity in our Archdiocese and would provide another excuse for all kinds of criticism by certain groups. I honestly do not believe there is much to be gained since from all I read I am convinced that ratification of ERA is hopeless by the deadline this summer. In the last analysis I am afraid it is not always the substance or lack thereof in the actual Amendment but rather the image of the leadership in their close collaboration with the abortion forces, the gay rights people and certain feminist spokesmen who have turned off so many people in the last couple of years of this effort. Realistically I believe that is the situation. Strategically I do not think there is much to be gained and I think there is quite a bit to be lost by a statement of the Human Rights Commission at this

time. And very candidly I would be concerned about our approaching Archdiocese Development Appeal effort."⁴²

On February 26, John sent a Memo to the archbishop advising him that the Human Rights Commission voted to endorse the Equal Rights Amendment. Sixteen members favored endorsing the amendment, three opposed, and one abstained. John indicated that he would like to continue a dialogue with the archbishop.⁴³ Archbishop May opposed the amendment, which was defeated in Missouri.

A long time Catholic feminist issue is the ordination of women. *Gudium et Spes*, no. 62 states "All the Faithful, both clerical and lay, should be accorded a lawful freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought and freedom of expression." Monsignor Shocklee and the Human Rights Commission subscribed fully to that dictum. Bishop O'Donnell wrote to John about the issue of "Women's Ordination". Bishop O'Donnell said that women's ordination as a speaker's bureau topic would be inappropriate. I can't help but believe that Monsignor Shocklee and the Human Rights Office staff would hold the position that this was an important topic and should be accorded the right to free discussion.

Monsignor Shocklee was certainly pro-life. Everything that related to the term pro-life was a matter of Justice for John. Bishop Wurm said that John sees humane prisoner treatment as a pro-life effort "directed toward the basic dignity of the human person". He worked to get a new prison built in an urban area, because the largest number of prisoners come from the cities. Building a prison in St. Louis, for example, would make it easier for the prisoner's family to visit and would tend to provide greater family stability. Tom Nolan said that John knew so many guys who were in prison. "A coalition of individuals and nineteen religious and civic organizations announced support for plans to locate a new medium-security prison in St. Louis or St. Louis County. 'It's not the most popular thing to do in St. Louis in these days,' Msgr. John A. Shocklee said at a news conference. 'But the need is there.' The main theme propounded by the group's

leaders was that the institution would house only prisoners who are soon to be released, and most of them will drift to the urban areas after release no matter where they have been imprisoned. So the group reasons, why not bring them to the metropolitan area now for a period of readjustment that might make them safer risks once they are free.⁴⁴ John favored parole over long prison sentences, and was very concerned about the disproportionate number of black men behind bars. He was very opposed to capital punishment and actively participated in the Death Penalty Coalition. Although he obviously opposed abortion, his opposition did not exclude all other justice issues. "We feel pro-life must come to include respect for the whole spectrum of human life in order to be truly Catholic."⁴⁵

Monsignor Shocklee visited the jails and prisons and encouraged the archbishops to do the same. A letter from John to Cardinal Carberry informs the cardinal that he made an appointment for him to visit the city jail, and that he would pick him up.⁴⁶ John was supportive of Dismas House, which was founded in 1959 by Father Charles Dismas Clark and Morris Shenker, a prominent St. Louis Attorney, as a halfway house for ex-offenders. It was named after Saint Dismas, the good thief who died next to Jesus. Dismas House offered counseling to help ex-offenders readjust to society and it assisted in finding them jobs. Father Clark, a Jesuit, received permission from the Missouri Jesuit Province to open the halfway house and Shenker provided the financial assistance.⁴⁷ John was helpful in many ways, but Father Joseph Kohler, who served as an assistant to Father Shocklee at St. Bridget and later became the Director of Dismas House, said that Monsignor Shocklee was most helpful in assisting men find employment.⁴⁸

John was also supportive of Rev. Robert Warner and his project for a halfway house for former patients of the Jefferson Barracks hospital, which worked in similar ways to assist veterans to enter civilian life. He wrote to Jonas

Weiss, Patients Advocacy Group on June 6, 1978 stating support for their work in the field of mental health.

Monsignor Shocklee was very involved with police matters. He was appointed to the St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners in June of 1979, and he supported the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement. In 1978, John participated in the annual convention of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives.⁴⁹ Monsignor Shocklee made numerous recommendations to St. Louis Police Chiefs for the promotion of African American police officers. He actively assisted people in need of jobs through referrals and letters of recommendation. He was also generous in congratulating police officers who received promotions, even those who were made police chief. (e.g., Robert E. Scheetz, in a letter dated September 10, 1985.) He wrote a letter to St. Louis Police Chief Eugene J. Camp on behalf of Mrs. Jeannette Fedrick, requesting that she be considered for promotion to the rank of Sergeant.⁵⁰ John often recommended members of his parish for positions in industry and in government. In a letter to Chief Camp, he recommended Mr. Charles McCreary, a member of St. Elizabeth's parish, for promotion.⁵¹ He also worked with Pearly Evans, Congressman William Clay's St. Louis office Director, in putting together the Police Community Relations effort. John helped define what a Congressional District Office did and it became a model for other local offices.⁵²

In an interview with Tom Nolan, Tom mentioned that John really got along with people of all different classes and types. "John could get along with the radical folks, but at the same time every cop in town loved him. John was just good to people. He didn't care whether you were a big cheese or a little cheese. And, the gangsters in town liked him. Jimmy Michaels liked him. Jimmy was sick and was at City Hospital. He wanted his confession heard and asked John to hear his confession. Of course, John did and gave him his time."⁵³

John was very ecumenical. "He had a wonderful relationship with the black ministers."⁵⁴ When he opened St. Leo's for the Second Black Madonna festival, the opening was previewed in The St. Louis Review. "The September 17 festival will open at 1:00pm with an ecumenical religious service. Guest speaker will be Bishop Arthur Marshall, Jr., of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The painting of the Black Madonna will be blessed by Catholic priests and Protestant ministers."⁵⁵ It was said that whenever there was something happening in the black community, John was there. He worked diligently for black vocations and furthered the cause of black vocations as a member of the Permanent Diaconate Committee. When he resigned from the committee in 1981, he requested that the Director of the Diaconate office "get someone in the committee who will have an interest in fostering black vocations".

Monsignor Shocklee had an especially strong bond with the Jewish Community. John worked closely with Rabbi Jeffrey Stiffman and Rabbi Robert P. Jacobs. He and Rabbi Stiffman had planned to lead an ecumenical tour of Rome and Israel in 1973, but Rabbi Stiffman stated : "John and I were trying to get together a group to go to Israel. It would have been one of the first interfaith trips from St. Louis. Unfortunately, the security situation was not good and people were afraid of traveling at that time. Our trip had never materialized, much to our mutual chagrin".⁵⁶ In 1964, John did successfully lead a group to Rome to attend the canonization of 22 African martyrs from Uganda, who became martyrs for their faith in the 19th century. They were the first Negro Africans to become saints.⁵⁷ John spoke at Stiffman's Synagogue, at the social action group or from the pulpit. "We worked on a lot of things together - back in the '60s on fair housing week we lobbied in Jefferson City and they laughed at us. He was always optimistic, always had a smile on his face."⁵⁸

In 1966, John received the Democracy in Action Award from the St. Louis Council, American Jewish Congress. John was the first Catholic priest to receive the award. "Father Shocklee's work has exemplified the eighth level of charity as outlined by Moses Mainanides: to give a man that which enables him to build his own life."⁵⁹

John was a member of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and he was also a member of the Executive Committee of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. "Rabbi Jacobs was a founder of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and he and John were very close friends. When John was awarded the Micah Award from the American Jewish Committee, Rabbi Jacobs, in presenting the award, said: "He was trained as an educator whose specialty in administration could have kept him behind a desk. It never did. He was principal of a high school and he saw the world through the eyes of young people. For them the world's injustice has no justification. If things are not right, it's up to us to put them right. Muscles and energy are not to go to waste. They are to be used to change the system and to bring about the just society. That's the direct way of the adolescent. John Shocklee never grew up to the point of losing energy or to see the world as untouchable. He has been a man on the move, a disquieted spirit, a man ashamed of an America with injustice ... For him the Bible commands: Do justly." And, "He became the team player par excellence. His staff of ten are his family; that is, one of his families. And when you hear his soft voice, you know he learned the supreme lesson of the Bible; to Walk Humbly with God.

On one of the plaques adorning his East Wall is a quotation from Martin Luther King, Jr. As I think of John Shocklee standing tall through the years of pain and abuse, and still standing tall, I hear Dr. King's words ringing loud and clear: 'The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in times of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. The true neighbor will risk his position, his prestige and even his life for the welfare of others.' Ladies and gentlemen, here is a great priest of God, a prince

of the church, a great citizen of St. Louis, a model for young and old, the awardee of the Micah Award.”⁶⁰

John did not only have Rabbi friends in the Jewish community. “Bert Rosen was one his Jewish friends. He worked as a food broker, along with Bob Krekler. “John inspired Bert, and when John became ill, Bert would take him lunch at least once a week.”⁶¹ Another friend, “Al Fleishman, writing in the St. Louis Business Journal, noted that though he is a member of the Jewish faith, he became good friends with Msgr. Shocklee, sharing the belief that people’ differences can be overcome. “Of John Shocklee, I have often said that for me, he was as close to having Christ-like virtues as is humanly possible.”⁶²

In a paper entitled Bridges of Understanding, John wrote: “In these days of ecumenism it is obvious we cannot be satisfied with limiting ourselves to a Catholic program. Every attempt must be made to cooperate with neighboring churches and synagogues to funnel the whole activity of the whole community. Catholic programs cannot succeed if they remain solely Catholic.

We must avoid the ‘do gooding’ and the paternalistic approach. The solution to the racial problem is not going to be the ‘cup of cold water’ given in the name of Christ.

We must destroy the walls of prejudice that have existed for too many years and to promote real interracial understanding by building bridges of understanding.”⁶³

6. Nuclear Deterrence, Central America and Politics

John was a coalition builder and rarely worked alone on major issues. He worked with Lutherans, Baptists, Jews, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and the United Church of Christ. In truth, the great issues calling for moral leadership were embraced by John and by the ministers and Rabbis who were religious leaders in St. Louis. When Bill Ramsey of the American Friends Service Committee faced charges arising from his arrest during a Central America Peace Vigil, the following letter was sent to all religious leaders from the Human Rights Office and signed by Monsignor John A. Shocklee, Executive Director of the Human rights Office, Archdiocese of St. Louis; Rabbi Robert P. Jacobs, Executive Vice President, St. Louis Rabbinical Association; and Reverend Benjamin C. Martin, Associate for Missions, Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy:

Dear Religious Leader,

Next Friday, January 16, Bill Ramsey will face charges arising from his arrest at the Federal Court Building on November 14, 1986 during a Central America peace vigil. In the process of that arrest, Bill was choked with a nightstick until he lost consciousness.

We are writing to invite your support of a public statement to be released in connection with Bill's trial next week. Your response is needed at your earliest convenience.

As you may know, Bill is the American Friends Service Committee representative in St. Louis and has been a leader in efforts for peace, disarmament, and human rights for many years. The religious community has benefitted from Bill's skills as a political analyst, an organizer, and educator.

Beyond these, we have valued his personal commitment and witness to nonviolence, rooted in his faith.¹

According to Bill Ramsey, John worked very closely with the American Friends Service Committee and the nuclear weapons freeze committee. "In 1981-82, John opened the door to the Human Rights Office to us in the nuclear weapons freeze committee. When we introduced the nuclear freeze campaign in St. Louis, we held a press conference. The idea was to get notable religious leaders at the press conference. John did not attend himself, but he got Archbishop May to come. John was right there from the very beginning – he would lend his contacts to our cause, contacts with labor and with his Right to Life Campaign. Out of this came the committee on Labor and Religion.

We never got money from the Campaign For Human Development, but there was money each year for the freeze – discretionary money from the Human Rights Office. In 1982, in an effort to introduce the Catholic Community to the freeze, he got us in to all the Deaneries to speak. We used the office of the Human Rights Office when they were on Taylor. He would work with people on the fringes of the Church, but at the same time would work with the status quo. John got the Freeze Movement meetings with both Senator Danforth and Senator Eagleton. Senator Eagleton actually spoke at one of the fund raisers."²

A staff person served on the executive committee of the National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign (the Human Rights Office was used as a location for these meetings), and the Commission on Human Rights sent a letter to President Reagan encouraging him to attend the opening session on the UN's special session on disarmament. These are just a few of their activities, as they were totally committed to the Freeze Movement. They urged parish priests to support the nuclear weapons freeze, they joined the Physicians for Social Responsibility in opposition to the arms race, and they requested Archbishop May to join in support of the ringing church bells on the Hiroshima-Nagasaki anniversary observance.

On June 30, 1983, John wrote the following to Archbishop May:

Dear Archbishop May,

Attached are ten commonly asked questions on the bishops' Pastoral on war and peace and answers formulated by our staff. We are planning to use them as a "question and answer" article in the forthcoming Human Rights Office tabloid insert in the St. Louis Review on the pastoral letter.

We believe our answers accurately and faithfully represent the pastoral letter, but we are asking you, as one of the bishops issuing the letter, to review those answers in order that we might avoid any possible misrepresentation.³

On July 7, Archbishop May replied that he would not change a word and congratulated John for having done a fine job. The report on questions and answers concerning the bishops' pastoral letter is only one of the many activities of John, the Human Rights Office and the Commission on Human Rights. They sponsored a Symposium on the Bishops' Pastoral, provided numerous presentations on the Bishops' Pastoral for parish gatherings and Catholic School faculties, jointly sponsored a workshop on "Catholic Church's Teaching on War, Peace, and Military Service" with the Catholic School Office for Administrators, for religious teachers and social studies teachers.

Critics of the presentations of the Human Rights Office on the Bishop's Pastoral on War and Peace claimed that the presentations had a pacifist bias, and that a symposium planned on the subject would have such a bias. The Human rights Office countered such charges by issuing a news release with Monsignor Shocklee's response:

Charges that the symposium on the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter on war and peace will have a pacifist bias are totally false, according to Msgr. John A. Schocklee, co-chair of the St. Louis Archdiocesan Commission on Human Rights, which is sponsoring the event.

The symposium will focus on the pastoral letter itself, which is based on the just war tradition of the Catholic Church and gives consideration to the Christian nonviolent approach. We will present the document as the bishops wrote it, and they certainly did not write it with a pacifist bias.

There are some people, however, who would rather we didn't talk about the bishops' letter at all, but we have a responsibility for seeing to it that Catholics and others in the Archdiocese of St. Louis become acquainted with it.⁴

John continued to take an active part in the freeze movement by providing funds, contacts, and active support. In a letter to Archbishop John May dated November 8, 1985, John and Mr. Raymond Oliver, Chairperson, World Peace Committee, Commission on Human Rights wrote concerning a proposed reassessment of certain aspects of the 1983 Pastoral letter The Challenge of Peace.

Dear Archbishop May,

We write you in anticipation of the November meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC. It is our understanding that some bishops will advance a proposal during the November meeting to reassess certain aspects of the 1983 pastoral letter The Challenge of Peace. Specifically the proposal about which we are writing will focus on the pastoral's "strictly conditioned moral acceptance of nuclear deterrence" (n.186). The proposal to be introduced at the NCCB meeting will request

a process of reassessment of this conditioned acceptance of nuclear deterrence.

We would ask you to give serious consideration to supporting this proposal. We believe that in the last two and a half years since the adoption by the conference of The Challenge of Peace overwhelming evidence has emerged to substantially support the conclusion that U.S. deterrence policy provides a cover for a dangerous expansion of the arms race, now, perhaps, even into outer space. The peace pastoral cautions is not meant to imply acceptance of weapons systems, strategic doctrines or policy initiatives which might advance in the name of strengthening deterrence (n.187).

Yet it is clear that in spite of strong efforts on the part of conference leadership to clarify this stance of the American Catholic bishops, the government continues to cite the need to maintain and even strengthen deterrence as the prime motive for new weapons systems (such as the MX missile) and for new strategic doctrines (such as the SDI "Star Wars" option). We draw your attention to Bishop James Malone's letter to members of the U.S. Congress (see Origins, March 28, 1985) which insists that the criteria enunciated in the pastoral letter (n. 188) clearly distance the bishops' conditioned acceptance of deterrence from the use of deterrence policy as a cover for the expansion of the arms race into more dangerous and costly types of weapon systems. Notwithstanding the objections of conference leadership, Congress has advanced the MX missile program.

It seems to us, therefore, that there is a need to begin to reassess this conditioned acceptance of deterrence offered by the peace pastoral.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Mr. Raymond Oliver

Monsignor John A. Shocklee⁵

Auxiliary Bishop Edward O'Donnell answered for the Archbishop and his response was, in the final analysis, a rejection of John and Mr. Oliver's position as outlined in their letter to the Archbishop. After explaining his personal belief in the immorality of failing to have a nuclear deterrence, Bishop O'Donnell proceeds to reject John's position.

"Certainly, the vote of the American Bishops will be divided on this issue. In addition, our stance on nuclear deterrence was not fully accepted when first published by the French and German conferences of bishops. I really wonder how something can be immoral in the United States and moral in Germany. I wonder how people can be bound to a moral decision that changes their whole way of life by the American hierarchy when the other hierarchies of the world do not share that same perception of morality and immorality.

I realize that this is an oversimplification of the way that the Church teaches but I think it reflects the perception of people, and I would really hate a formal pronouncement of the American Bishops that such and such a course of action in any area is Immoral, to then be put out to the people as though that were something that they could observe or neglect at their own discretion.

I think that the preferred solution might be to have a group of bishops – or perhaps even an ecumenical group – constituted to monitor the progress of work toward disarmament and peace. That

group could make an annual evaluation based on the principles of the pastoral letter, a little bit like the scientists do with their atomic clock. I think this would get away from my problems with the teaching authority of the Church, and at the same time give people moral guidance in a very important matter.

Thank you again for your input and your interest in this matter.

Sincerely in Christ,

The most reverend Edward J. O'Donnell
Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis⁶

John would undoubtedly continue to hold the position held by the nuclear weapons freeze committee, in opposition to that of the Archdiocese. He often found himself outside the status quo and the institutional Church. John's positions on social issues and his involvement in politics did not meet the approval of everyone. Father Frank Cleary, S.J., a friend of John's, said that John was much loved by younger priests but not by older priests. Certainly, the obvious influence and power he acquired, as the Executive Director of the Human Rights Office was not popular with some of the more conservative older priests.

Another area in which the Human Rights Office and Monsignor Shocklee were not in accord with the Archbishop was participation in The Sanctuary Movement. Participation in the Sanctuary Movement was not approved by Archbishop John May. However, the issue was hotly debated within the Catholic Church, and among most other denominations, as well. On December 1, 1985, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch addressed the sanctuary problem around the country and in St. Louis. "In St. Louis, Pastor Theodore Schroeder of Immanuel Lutheran Church offered Immanuel Lutheran Church as a sanctuary for people from Central America, particularly from Guatemala and El Salvador. The St. Louis

Archdiocese forbids Catholic Organizations to be sanctuaries. But Schroeder said that more Catholics than anyone else are assisting in sanctuary at Immanuel Lutheran Church."

"Schroeder and others, like Jim Herning of the Archdiocesan Human Rights Office, contend that Central American Aliens must be given help until the INS decides to give more of them legal asylum. They believe that the aliens have the right to asylum under the Refugee Act of 1980, the United Nations Accord, and the Geneva Convention."⁷ Although Archbishop May forbade the involvement of Catholic Organizations, it is obvious that John and the Human Rights Office were in support. John and Pastor Schroeder joined together on numerous projects and were close friends. In an interview with Pastor Schroeder, he indicated that John supported the Sanctuary Movement, but could not provide sanctuary on Diocesan property against the orders of the Archbishop.

Jim Herning, a member of the Human Rights Office, and in 1990 its Executive Director, sent a Memo to Archbishop May, regarding the Sanctuary Movement. In the Memo, Herning lays out what was occurring in other churches and something of the discussions being held. In relation to the St. Louis Archdiocese, he states:

"Over the last few months, the Commission on Human Rights has been discussing the subject. It hopes to reach a decision at the June 27, 1983 meeting. My sense is that the members are generally supportive of the sanctuary strategy. They have previously endorsed temporary asylum/extended voluntary departure. Also, some Catholic parishes and religious communities have been asking about what position the Commission has, and what position the Archbishop has."

"Because of current laws, the provision of physical sanctuary as well as assisting with providing sanctuaries (e.g.: public support endorsements, donating food, clothes, money, etc.) are illegal actions. As such, the sanctuary strategy is civilly disobedient. Whether or not the government would prosecute the people involved is at this time, a much-

discussed point: some say that 'the word' is not to prosecute; others say that you cannot be sure. Penalties can include jail time and/or fines."

"I think that it is important for the Archbishop to have a position on this matter."

"I truly believe the issue at hand --- that is, the deportation of El Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees back to their countries--- is a life, torture and death question for many of the people."

Herning made recommendations for the Archbishop to follow in the event he would permit Diocesan involvement.⁸ Jim Herning undoubtedly was Monsignor Shocklee's major advisor on matters related to Latin America.

On May 31, Archbishop May responded:

"Thank you very much for your memo of May 27 with all the enclosed explanatory material with regard to the sanctuary for El Salvadoran refugees issue.

I do want to give a very clear response and so I address section 7 on page 2 of your memo. It is my firm conviction that I should stand on this matter together with Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop Roach, Archbishop Hickey, etc. In other words I would not agree to have any of our churches and institutions in this Archdiocese used for illegal sanctuary. I regret that I cannot leave this decision to the individual parish or unit even though they may wish to assume responsibility etc. There is no way whatever according to the law of the State of Missouri that I can escape ultimate and really full responsibility for any such fraction of the law."⁹

There was not unanimity within the Church, as seen from a response from the Archbishop to a request from Human Rights Office staff asking whether the use of religious community properties being used for illegal sanctuary was

acceptable, in light of the Archbishop's directive. The fact that the question was asked is indication that some religious communities were not in agreement with the Archdiocese.

The Archbishop's response was: "Religious communities are obviously legally responsible for what they do with their own community-owned property. At the same time, they need to remember that in the popular mind they are identified with the Archdiocese and serve here as members of the Archdiocese while they are here. It would seem to me that they should do what they feel bound to do in conscience but there is no need to talk about it or to publicize it."¹⁰

In 1986, the National Conference of Catholic Charities, and bishops of Arizona, supported the Sanctuary Movement.¹¹ Also, the Interfaith Committee on Latin America joined Immanuel Lutheran Church in efforts to support the Sanctuary Movement.¹²

On March 24, 1980, Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero was assassinated while saying Mass. In December of the same year, four American Missionaries were killed. It was presumed that government forces perpetrated these murders. The murder of Archbishop Romero occurred one month after he had written to President Carter asking that no military assistance be provided by the United States to the government of El Salvador. The U.S. Bishops issued a resolution on El Salvador on April 13, 1981. As part of their resolution, the Bishops stated: "We speak as bishops and pastors of the Catholic Church, which has been called by the second Vatican Council to stand as the sign and safeguard of the dignity of the person. We speak to the policy question of El Salvador because public policies affect people. We continue to have serious doubts about and have substantial differences with U.S. Policy toward El Salvador.

Specifically we wish to reiterate our opposition to military aid and intervention by the major outside powers. We oppose intervention in any form by the Soviet Union and its allies; we likewise oppose U. S. military aid or

intervention in the war. Furthermore, we oppose the importation and use of arms received from any source.

We urge instead that greater attention be given by the U.S. government to a political resolution of the conflict in El Salvador by encouraging dialog among all parties. We support economic assistance to the people of El Salvador, but we also realize that its full effectiveness requires a basic political resolution of the conflict."¹³

The Human Rights Commission of St. Louis, at the May, 1981 meeting, voted unanimously to support the U.S. Bishops Resolution on El Salvador, and called for an end of arms delivery from all nations involved in the conflict in El Salvador.¹⁴ On June 1, 1981, Senator John Danforth wrote to John and the Human Rights Commission stating his support for the U.S. Government involvement in El Salvador, because there is evidence that the Soviet, Cuban, and Nicaraguan Communists have been aiding the subversives in El Salvador.

Monsignor Shocklee supported people's struggles for Justice everywhere and put the resources of the Human Rights Office at the disposal of agents seeking Justice. The Human rights Office was a direct participant in the Inter-Faith Committee On Latin America (IFCLA), and a staff member was a member of the Core Committee, as well as a member of the Guatemala project Committee and the Finance Committee. The Human Rights Commission supported the IFCLA financially and with in-kind contributions, according to Jim Herning.¹⁵

In March of 1984, The Commission on Human rights, Archdiocese of St. Louis, issued a statement directed at Congress and the Administration:

The St. Louis Archdiocese Commission on Human Rights urges the
United States Congress and the Administration:

1. To re-orient our government's role and redirect its actions in Central America so that the US can become a leader and a catalyst for stopping the drift toward a regional war; for diminishing the military elements of the conflicts; and for political dialogue and negotiations within and among the countries of Central America.
2. To change the basic emphasis and thrust of present US policy away from an escalating reliance on military force, and away from pursuing ever increasing military assistance and intervention in Central America, especially in El Salvador.
3. To initiate direct discussions with the Soviet Union and other countries regarding the termination of all outside interference and intervention in Central America.
4. To support the objectives and activities of the Contadora Group or a similar regional effort.
5. To stop United States covert operations and all other destabilization activity against Nicaragua, and to engage the country diplomatically.
6. To formulate and choose policies vis-à-vis Central America which not only accepts but also welcome the social changes necessary to achieve social justice and human rights in this region.
7. To stop the deportation of Central American refugees in the United States, and to grant them temporary asylum or extended voluntary departure status until it is clearly proven safe for them to return to their homelands.

Shocklee spoke at Memorial Day Convocation for Peace and Justice in Central America on May 28, 1984 at Memorial Plaza. The event was sponsored by the IFCLA.¹⁶

Monsignor Shocklee and the Human Rights Commission continued to be critical of the United States Central American policies. They were strongly opposed to the U.S assistance to the Contras in Nicaragua. On April 16, 1985, John spoke at a rally in opposition to U.S. aid to the Contras.

I want to thank the organizers of this rally for the opportunity to speak today.

I would like to make 3 brief comments:

First: I want to say that the Commission on Human Rights of the St. Louis Archdiocese is very critical of, and opposed to, any renewal of U.S. assistance to the Contras who are attacking Nicaragua. We believe that reliance on an escalation of a Contra-based military strategy will NOT achieve the goals of a negotiated agreement, of reinforcing a pluralistic Nicaraguan government, and of peace. For the U.S. to support such a military strategy at this time --- no matter how it is described or dressed-up to appear --is "unwise, unjustified and destructive of the very values a democratic nation (like ours) should support in the world.

Secondly: I want to thank Senator Eagleton and Representatives Clay, Young, Gephardt and Volker who have expressed opposition to aiding the Contras. I would ask them to stand firm in their opposition in these days ahead.

And Third: I ask Senator Danforth and Representative Emerson to reconsider their positions. I urge them to sustain the current prohibition on U.S. aid to the Contras.

Thank you.¹⁷

An article in the St. Louis Review on April 19, 1985 indicated the opposition of the Catholic Bishops to U.S. Military aid to the Contras. On May 2, 1985, John sent a memo to all Missouri Congressional Representatives requesting that they reject new initiatives to secure U.S. Assistance for the Contras. Representative Gephardt responded on May 6, indicating his agreement with John.

On April 17, 1985, the U.S. Catholic Conference sent letters to all Members of Congress, stating:

1. Military aid to Guatemala should not be provided in any form.
2. The Conference views with great concern the continued build-up of U.S. military aid to Honduras.
3. The Conference opposes U.S. military aid to El Salvador.
4. The Conference opposes military aid to forces seeking to overthrow the government of Nicaragua.

On November 6, 1985, a letter to the Editor from Monsignor Shocklee appeared in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

"With regard to the Catholic Church and Central America, the Human Rights Office has consistently supported the positions of the United States bishops as stated by Archbishop John O'Conner in testimony before the subcommittee on Western Hemisphere's Affairs of the House of Representatives, April 17, 1985, regarding their opposition to military aid to forces seeking to overthrow the government of Nicaragua: We are convinced that such military aid undercuts the possibility of a political solution within Nicaragua – jeopardizes the political process elsewhere in the region – violates existing treaty obligations – and undermines the moral standing of the United States within the international community".¹⁸

Obviously, the Human Rights Office was deeply involved with the struggle in Central America, especially El Salvador and Guatemala. Msgr. Shocklee, as the director, participated with the staff in efforts to affect changes in U.S. Policies in Central America. John also provided direct assistance to groups and to individuals. For example, on October 5, 1989, John wrote a letter to Secretary of State, James Baker, requesting that Baker grant visas to Mirtala Mejis and Isabel Hernandez, so they could come to the U.S. for medical treatment.

The Human rights Office established The World Peace Committee, which was supportive of all efforts to bring about peace in the world and end proliferation of weaponry by the United States. However, they also believed that world peace is jeopardized by exploitation of poor countries by wealthy countries and their multi-national corporations.

A letter to Robert Burrows of Rawlings Sporting Goods Company stated:

"We write to you as the World Peace Committee of the Commission On Human Rights, Archdiocese of St. Louis. Our task is to study and address questions of human rights, social justice and world peace at the local, national and international levels of society.

It has come to our attention, specifically through an article in *Multinational Monitor* (August, 1982), that criticisms have been leveled against Rawlings Sporting Goods Company and its employment policies/ practices in Haiti.

As you may note from the enclosed article, the writer makes several allegations: Baseballs produces for 7-9c and sold in the United States for 50 times that amount; Working hours from 5:00a.m. to 7:00p.m.; lack of employee benefits; lack of representative collective bargaining.

Our committee would appreciate the opportunity to understand the situation from your company's point of view. We would be very happy to meet with you if that would be convenient – or you may wish to share information in writing with us.

We thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Msgr. John a. Shocklee
Chairperson
Commission On Human rights

Mr. Raymond Oliver, Chairperson
World Peace Committee
Commission On Human Rights

Monsignor Shocklee was also politically active on the local, state, and National levels. John and the Human Rights Commission opposed the Reagan Administration's policies in Central America and on numerous occasions wrote letters to President Reagan and the Missouri Senators and Representatives expressing opposition to the Reagan policies.

John wrote to President Reagan on November 21, 1984, expressing concern about the CIA providing a manual on guerilla warfare to the Contras. The manual contained detailed instruction on torture. John was opposed to the Contras and expressed his opposition through letters and through

demonstrations. In a letter to President Reagan, May 21, 1984, John wrote in support of the testimony to the Kissinger Commission by Archbishop Hickey, which states: "Let me state that as an American citizen and a Catholic Bishop, I find use of U.S. tax dollars for the purpose of covert destabilization of a recognized government to be unwise, unjustified and destructive of the very values that a democratic nation would support in the world."¹⁹

John, the Human Rights Office and the Commission on Human Rights continued to oppose the policies of the United States with regard to Central America. In February of 1982, John wrote Representative Gephardt expressing concern about the Reagan administration's role in El Salvador. He asked Gephardt whether it would be possible to meet and discuss the problem, when Gephardt was in St. Louis. "The Reagan administration is sending military aid for El Salvador. It has been documented repeatedly that the junta in El Salvador is directly responsible for at least 80% of the civilian deaths in the last two years — over 20,000 men, women, and children murdered."²⁰

On May 3, 1983, John wrote to President Reagan urging him to change government policy to allow and to grant temporary asylum to Central American refugees, especially those from El Salvador and Guatemala.

In 1989, John was still writing to Gephardt about the problems in El Salvador. "We write to call your attention to recent developments affecting the repopulation community of Guarjila in the Department of Chalatenango, El Salvador. We are especially concerned because a Catholic sister who is a medical doctor and who is from St. Louis, Sr. Ann Manganaro, SL, MD (Sister of Loreto), is living in and providing medical services to the Guarjila community." A letter we received from the community states that the community has been subjected to an escalation of oppression and violence."²¹

Although a Democrat, John was not adverse to praising or supporting Republican legislators, especially Senator John Danforth. "Dear Jack, I want to congratulate you for your report on the people of Cambodia. You have touched the hearts of many Americans. You have done a great job in Senate. Your present stand on aid to Cambodia is further proof of your compassion and statesmanship."²² John wrote to Danforth stating that he was distressed by an attack on Danforth by a priest, in relation to a speech where Danforth said; "For the present, the emphasis must be on improving the economic situation in our country." The criticism by the priest was that Danforth had lost his personal interest in abortion. John felt that the priest misinterpreted the speech.²³ John also wrote to Danforth congratulating him for not supporting the sale of AWAC planes to Saudi Arabia.²⁴ On the other hand, John was critical of Danforth's stand on support of the Contras and the Reagan Central American policies, as well as on labor issues and other domestic social issues. John's strongest support came from Democratic legislators, especially from Senator Tom Eagleton and Representative William Clay.

Education was always high on John's agenda. In a letter to Bill Clay, he requested that Clay support an amendment to H12050, a bill to provide education tax breaks, but only for college and university students. The amendment to the bill would allow for the inclusion of elementary and secondary schools. John wrote to Governor Joseph Teasdale requesting that he not sign HB1242, which would provide tax breaks for savings and loan associations, as it would have the effect of reducing funds for public education. The Governor vetoed the bill. He also requested the Governor to establish a task force or commission to address the problem of abused women and children. He recommended that the cause rather than the effect of brutality and violence be addressed.

John was very active in State politics. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the Labor Priest, John led the fight to defeat the Right To Work legislation in Missouri. He regularly contacted State Senators and Representatives, as well as the Governors and various Department Heads. He contacted State Senators Harriet Woods, (later Lt. Governor Woods), Jet Banks and John Schneider often for support of legislation affecting low-income people, children, and families. For example, he wrote to them concerning the State's plan for Title XX, and the fact that funding had been eliminated for camping. He reminded the senators of the importance for camping for children. He wrote to Senator Schneider thanking him for supporting joint custody legislation.

Monsignor Shocklee was very critical of both the Federal and State budgets and the idea put forth by some politicians that the poor can be served to a great extent through charity. "Msgr. John Shocklee leveled strong criticism at the federal budget plan which calls for more cuts in programs that aid the poor and elderly. Shocklee stated that the Church's position is that our nation's economic policy, and the federal budget in particular, must reflect the broad values of social justice and human rights. The churches cannot, by their charity, be mufflers of the harsh injustice imposed by an unresponsive government."²⁵ His concern for the poor was constant, and he joined with other religious leaders to attempt solutions to the plight of the poor.

On September 29, 1982 he wrote to Eagleton advising him of actions of the Interreligious Emergency Committee for Economic Justice. "Dear Tom, On Tuesday, October 5, the Interreligious Emergency Committee for Economic Justice will have a briefing for members of Jewish, Protestant and Catholic faiths about the problems of the poor in our area. The religious leaders of St. Louis are concerned about the continuing and increasing burdens placed on the poor, and average people by federal budget cuts. The leaders have said 'the poor have suffered enough'. Enclosed are copies of the literature mailed by the Jewish

Protestant and Catholic religious leaders to their people. I think it would be well for you, if you or one of your staff could be present for this briefing. Obviously, the participants would like to know your position on this matter. I can tell you that the general feeling of the religious leaders, most of whom have been very silent, is that things have gone far enough. I do hope you can be present. Sincerely yours, Msgr. John A. Shocklee.²⁶

"As the Roman Catholic Church seeks to live out the Gospel call to live justly and promote human dignity, the Commission on Human Rights seeks to help Catholics and others try to put Catholic teaching into practice. The Commission will accomplish this in part by taking public positions on social justice issues, supporting legislation or promoting action on behalf of justice. The Commission will also work with parishes, deaneries and other organizations within the church to help them use their resources to the best advantage."²⁷

In a May 10, 1985 Memo to the Commission on Human Rights and to the Human Rights Office staff supporting an increase in Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC), he requests that they take action steps recommended by the Missouri Catholic Conference's Social Action Committee:

1. Pray for legislators to make wise decisions based on sound moral principles, as they take action.
2. Write or call your State Senator if he is a member of the Appropriations Committee, and urge continued support for the AFDC section of HB 11 and urge them to raise the appropriations to meet 100 percent of the Missouri standard of need.²⁸

The Primary Ethical Norm put forward by the bishops, according to Monsignor Shocklee is: "the dignity of the human person, realized in community with others, is the criterion against which all aspects of economic life must be

measured".²⁹ John strongly supported all measures related to voting and voting rights. In October of 1981, he wrote to Senator Eagleton and Senator Danforth requesting them to support the Voting Rights Act of 1982, adopted by the House of Representatives. He also requested them to encourage Strom Thurman to take up the matter of the voting rights extension. John believed that all citizens should involve themselves in politics as a civic duty. Politics for John was civically oriented rather than clerically oriented. His politics related to the needs of his flock rather than to the needs of the Church. However, he viewed working for the best interest of his flock to be in the best interest of the Church and the best interest of society.

Much is said about John's saying, "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach a man to fish and he will feed himself". However, to better understand John is to understand what he wrote to a former student about Justice: "God is Justice and when we lose concern for Justice, we lose God." So, working for God means working for Justice – Justice for workers -- the labor priest – Justice for Women – work with sister Agnes to help rehabilitate prostitutes – Justice for the poor – working for the interests of African Americans, because as Joe Wiley said, John was not white, not black, just human. According to Joe, Tom Nolan said "Father Shocklee had a very casual relationship with Jesus – and that's true. He could bring Jesus into your life as though he was your friend" --- Justice for the people in Central America – opposition to U.S. assistance to the Contras, opposition to the unjust regimes in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. Justice for the rich, who were spiritually poor – Justice for those people who are in prison – Bishop O'Donnell, said, "For John, jails were a pro-life issue". Justice for those seeking sanctuary – John supported the Sanctuary Movement. John's priestly life was dedicated to seeking and doing Justice – God's work.

John did not pop out of the earth or drop down from the sky, and his ideas, too, did not originate out of nowhere. He and his ideas were anchored in the soil of the world in which we all live. He became Father John, beloved by those who knew him, because he unequivocally accepted Jesus and the teachings found in

the Bible, and the social teaching from the Papal Encyclicals, and from the associations with other dedicated priests, Protestant ministers, and Jewish Rabbis. As he became known nationally, and even beyond, he had the opportunity to meet with many important people, secular as well as religious. He attended several White House Conferences and often represented the Archbishop, particularly Cardinal Carberry and Archbishop May, in conferences and meetings they were unable to personally attend. Monsignor Shocklee met with Pope John Paul II in Chicago to discuss establishing Human Rights Offices in all dioceses, modeled after the St. Louis Human Rights Office. He also met with Mother Theresa and Pope John XXIII, and the Human Rights Office received congratulations from Pope John Paul II on their 25th anniversary. "The Holy Father was pleased to learn of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Commission on Human Rights of the Archdiocese of St. Louis."³⁰

The Commission on Human Rights in St. Louis was established by Cardinal Ritter in July of 1963. In a letter on July 8, 1963, Cardinal Ritter appointed people to be members of the Human Rights Commission, and John was among those appointed.

Dearly Beloved: I am pleased to announce that a Commission on Human Rights has been established in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. To this commission I have appointed representatives from the Reverend clergy and also from the devoted laity, both negro and white. It will be their function to advise and recommend procedures which will bring about a rule of justice and charity in the community; to initiate a program that will enable all to understand the principles involved in the current civil rights issue and, thirdly, to formulate programs of action that will overcome the obstacles that now impede the use of God-given rights.

This is an issue that none of us can avoid or reject. It is a challenge to our Christian conscience that has been with us for a century. At the very

basis of the way of life that our Divine Lord taught us is the concept of a community of love in which each person recognizes and respects the



Monsignor Shocklee and Pope John XXIII



Monsignor Shocklee and Mother Theresa

dignity and destiny of the other. St. Paul graphically taught us the lesson when he reminded us that there is "One God the Father of us all, and who is in all things and in each of us." Even if we are not immediately involved we must be immediately concerned.

The hour is already late and the need is proportionately urgent. Each of us is called upon, first of all, to examine our own consciences in the light of the teachings of the Church so that any taint of prejudice or discrimination may be discovered and removed. Then all must resolve to cooperate fully and faithfully both with the Church and with the community to achieve the goals toward which the Commission will guide and direct us.

The ultimate success of this work will be determined by our spiritual courage and this can come only from Almighty God. Let us daily request of Divine Providence the graces we need to follow humbly the promptings of the Savior Whose Blood was shed for all men. It must not be said that we failed because the path was difficult since we know as a matter of faith that His grace will be sufficient.

Yours in Christ,

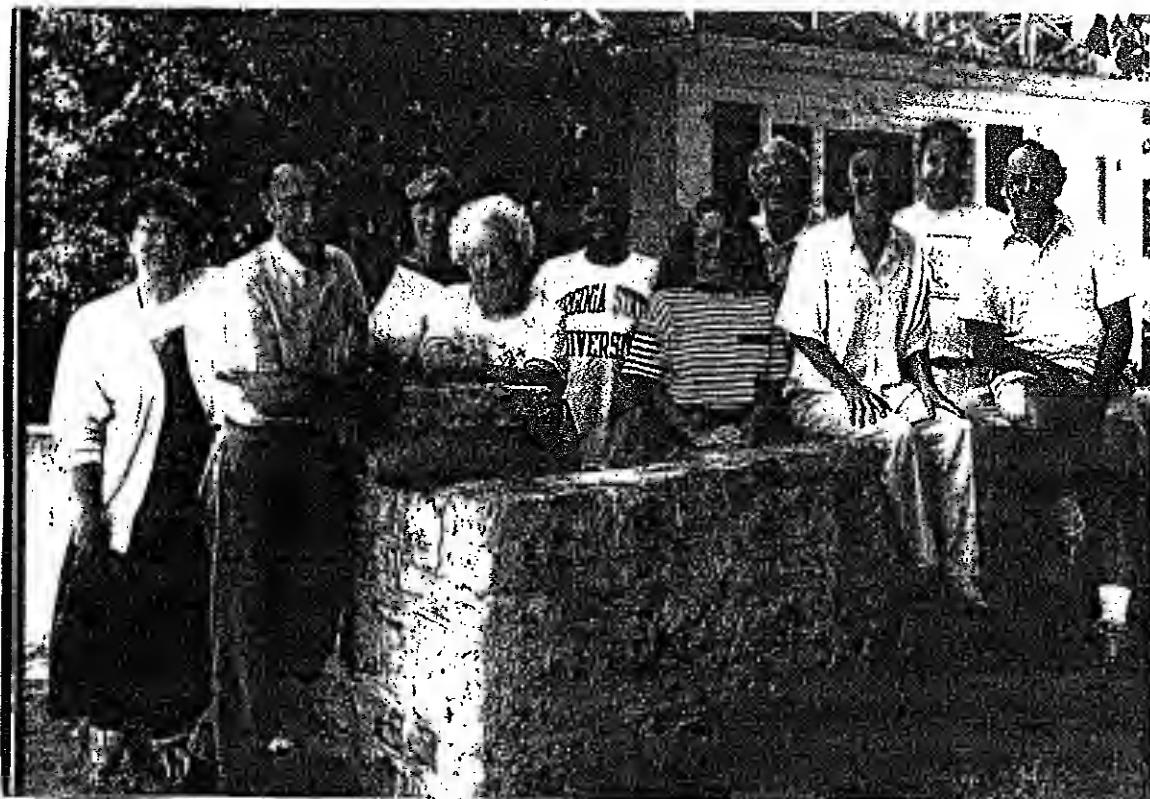
Joseph Cardinal Ritter
Archbishop of St. Louis

Ritter set the tone for the Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Office from the beginning. "When Cardinal Ritter began the Human Rights Commission, he told local clergy, 'I want you to give the racial problem your immediate pastoral attention so that justice and charity will prevail among our Catholic people in every section of the Archdiocese.'³¹ He was the first Bishop in the United States to send diocesan priests to foreign missions, when he sent three priests to Bolivia, and along with his ecumenism and his strong belief in

freedom of conscience and of freedom of expression he established the pattern of policy and programs adopted by Monsignor Shocklee.

Father John Alexander Shocklee was the second Director of the Human Rights Office. Monsignor Francis Doyle was the first, and served from 1964 to 1971. Father Shocklee served as Director from 1971 to 1990, at which time the first lay director, Dr. James Herning, became the Director. The Archdiocese of St. Louis established what may have been the first Human Rights Office in the United States. As the Director of the Human Rights Office, John chose very competent associates. John's leadership, according to Bill Ramsey, allowed the Human Rights Office to maintain several things at the same time. He brought in good people and let them function in their own way. Tom Nolan said, "John was really good at hiring really smart people and then leaving them alone. He had a staff of full and part time people with specialized knowledge or experience in many facets of community life, among whom were Dr. James Herning, Sister Kathleen Crowley,csj, Tom Nolan, and Father Richard Creason. The staff deserves much credit for the innovative programs they developed for John's approval.

The Human Rights Office Staff



The office supported the Human Rights Commission whose stated purpose was: "To utilize and focus the influence of the Church for maximum human and social development by affecting racial attitudinal changes and by supporting social policies that promote equality of interaction among individuals, groups and institutions in the Archdiocese of St. Louis."³²

In 1978, the Commission had 24 members, made up of priests, religious, and lay members, black and white. The Commission consisted of seven administrative programs; Community services, Campaign for Human Development, Urban and Black Community Ministry Program, Jails Ministry, Parish Outreach, Participation in the Missouri Catholic Conference's Department of Social Concerns, and the Commission on Evangelization. The Commission, through its research activities and the social teaching of the Church, addressed both immediate and long-term issues relating to justice, and made appropriate recommendations to the archbishop.

During John's tenure as the Director of the Commission, the issues, and therefore, the activities of the Human Rights Office expanded greatly. John's relationship with Archbishop May facilitated this expansion, because Archbishop May approved. "John was an urban person, but all of a sudden we got into writing position papers and looking at national and international issues."³³ John established task forces for: International Human Rights, Health Care, Housing, Nuclear Energy, Economic and Social Concerns, World Peace, and Jail Ministry. That May approved of the manner in which the Human Rights Office functioned under John's leadership is made very apparent in response to the first effort to reorganize the office, with a focus different from John's. The following is a memo, dated June 14, 1983, concerning the Human Rights Office, from Archbishop May to Monsignor O'Donnell (later Bishop O'Donnell).

Monsignor Slattery spoke to me about the proposed relocation of the Human Rights Office and said that you had mentioned to him the necessity of reconstituting that office.

We have spoken about that matter several times. When Monsignor Shocklee was made Pastor of Ste. Genevieve we were talking about giving him the title Archbishop's Representative for Human Rights" and considering Jim Herning to head the office. Monsignor Slattery had also made a proposal that Human rights become a department of Catholic Charities and you agreed with me that the Human Rights Office should be kept independent.

I have informally felt out Monsignor Shocklee about his acceptance at Ste. Genevieve and I have heard no word from him or anyone else about any unhappiness on the part of the people that he has another position with the Archdiocese. I think we should move slowly also in the matter of reorganization.

This office is one of the offices that the secular community – and the press—would have the most interest in. Monsignor Shocklee is something of a folk hero to a lot of people in the community, white as well as black. A series of events which we know are really not related might be seen as a pattern of de-emphasis of our commitment to human rights – the new position of Monsignor Shocklee, the physical moving of the office (for their third location in about three years), and then the announcement of a reorganization which would certainly mean smaller staff. We should weigh the pros and cons carefully.

In the same mysterious ways that Monsignor Slattery raises money, Monsignor Shocklee does the same. The Archdiocese only gives the office about \$30,000 per year, they raise the rest. Thus the cost to us doesn't seem at all excessive. Granted the money raised through grants, etc, also comes from the generosity of the Catholic people, those funds are appropriated knowingly by the agencies which handle them and they feel that the results are worthwhile.

Like you, I question the effectiveness of the office in many ways. Their endless reports might be explained by the necessity of reporting in this way to the agencies from which they seek grants. The bottom line

result of what they do is good: we have a good reputation in the black community, and we have an agency that can analyze and even make statements on matters that otherwise would end up on your desk.

I suggest that we discuss the matter and then meet with Shocklee and lay the cards on the table. If it appears that the office is not as efficient as it could be, perhaps the reductions could come from attrition, as employees leave. The first step would be a freeze on hiring and a reallocation of responsibilities as needs demand.

I am not arguing completely against a more drastic renovation, but I think we should know all the possible consequences, especially in perception, before we move.

I enclose some information on the structure of the office, which I think I have sent you previously. I also have payroll information if you want it.³⁴

The policies and programs instituted by Monsignor Shocklee, when he was the Director of the Human Rights Office, remained the same through the tenures of James Herning, who succeeded John, and Thomas Nolan who was the Director after Herning. Herning left the office due to illness, but returned and was the Director for the last six months or so prior to the appointment of Edward Martin as the Director of the Human Rights Office.

In 1994, Archbishop Justin Rigali, now Cardinal Rigali, became the Archbishop of the St. Louis Diocese. Cardinal Rigalli was ordained a priest on April 25, 1961. In October of 1961 he entered the North American College in Rome to study Canon Law at the Pontifical Gregorian University. From 1961 until he was appointed Archbishop of St. Louis by Pope John Paul II, Cardinal Rigali held numerous very important posts in the Vatican. Cardinal Rigali never served as a parish priest.

In 1997, while in Rome attending the Synod for the Americas, the then Archbishop Rigali met Edward Martin. Martin attended the synod as

the representative for youth. He was in Rome in November and December of 1997. In 1998, Rigali appointed Martin Director of the Human Rights Office. Martin served in that capacity for three years, until 2001. Bishop Braxton was appointed Vicar of Social Concerns. Edward Martin, under the supervision of Bishop Braxton and in accord with the desires of Archbishop Rigali, begins to focus the Human Rights Office away from global issues to diocesan and parish-based activities.³⁵ In a biography posted by the Ed Martin for Congress Committee, it is stated: "As the youngest director of his kind in the United States, Ed refocused the office to the needs of families, neighborhoods, and the vulnerable members of the community."

This radical change in direction brought criticism from many directions, but certainly from former staff members and social activists, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and secular. "A devastating thing that has happened is that all the things that John set up are decimated now. Rigali appointed a person who has no knowledge of what the Human Rights Office was."³⁶ "A critical moment in HRO was when Ed Martin was a student in Rome and he connected with Rigali, and Rigalli appointed him head of HRO. He appointed Bishop Braxton Vicar of Social Concerns. The agenda was clear that they were going to dismantle the Human rights Office. That's when the problems began."³⁷ Many other people questioned the archbishop about dismantling various human rights projects, but he refused to meet with any of them. Bob Kelley, a union executive, complained in his interview, mentioned in Chapter 4, that the archbishop would not permit the Catholic elementary teachers to unionize. This is after the archbishop had given Union Leaders signed copies of *Rerum Novarum*. Sister Mary Jude Jun, in a letter to the editor, stated what many

people in St. Louis thought about the change in direction and the closing of the Human Rights Office.

"My heart was saddened when reading in Archdiocese announces layoff of 25(Jan 20) that the Archdiocese Human Rights Office no longer will exist as a stand-alone agency. After years of dedicated work done by outstanding peace and justice leaders of our community, this truly is a big loss. Our loved and highly respected Monsignor John Shocklee would be disturbed.

Catholic Charities, the Hispanic Office and the Charles Lwanga Center are not missioned to do this kind of work. As direct service agencies, they are wonderful agencies for poverty-related issues such as hunger, homelessness and other basic needs. But the important areas of advocacy, systemic change and organizing will fall by the wayside.

This is reminiscent of the story of the agencies set up along the riverside to pull babies out of the water, heal the sick ones and bury the dead. This kept happening, yet no one went to the source of the problem to see who was throwing the babies into the water upstream. That's the only way to expose the root causes of injustice and work to end them."³⁸

As Archbishop, Rigali was in total control of the activities and policies of the Human Rights Office. The changes that occurred were his changes, not those of Martin or Braxton. His years at the Vatican, and his not having the experience of the give and take of the parish priest, developed an authoritarian leadership style that required less delegation of responsibility and less openness. Some laymen and some priests viewed the Archbishop as very conservative and a protector of the status quo. Yet others viewed him as open and friendly and very caring of the priests in his diocese. In relation to the changes he brought about in the area of human rights, he was not in sync with his predecessors Cardinal Ritter and Archbishop John May, both of whom, like Monsignor Shocklee,

had a world view in relation to the Human Rights Office. They saw social change rather than charity as the direction for the Human Rights Office. In an interview with the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Shocklee said: "I just don't like charity. Poverty is the boy with an IQ of 130 who can't get a job better than pushing a broom without the influence of his parish priest. I don't want to tell people what to do, to control them and get them dependent, I want to help create opportunity."³⁹

It would seem that even Pope John Paul II would be more in agreement with a world-view systemic change mode for Catholic organizations and people. Cardinal Rigali was close to Pope John Paul II when he served as the director of the English Language Section of the Vatican Secretariat of State. In that position he accompanied Pope Paul VI to various countries, and later accompanied Pope John Paul II on a number of pastoral visits.⁴⁰ The Pope's views seem at odds with the positions taken by Rigli as Archbishop of St. Louis.

"In fact, if the social question has acquired a world-wide dimension, this is because the demand for justice can only be satisfied on that level." (Note 10) And: We should add here that in today's world there are many other forms of poverty. For are there not certain privations or deprivations which deserve this name? The denial or limitation of human rights – as for example the right to religious freedom, the right to share in the building of society, the freedom to organize and to form unions, or to take initiatives in economic matters – do these not impoverish the human person as much as, if not more than, the deprivation of material goods. And is development which does not take into account the full affirmation of these rights really development on the human level?" (Note 15)⁴¹

"All of humanity must think of the parable of the rich man and the beggar. Humanity must translate it into contemporary terms, in terms of economy and politics, in terms of human rights, in terms of relations between the 'First', 'Second' and 'Third World'. We cannot stand idly by when thousands of human beings are dying of hunger. Nor can we remain indifferent when the rights of the

human spirit are trampled upon, when violence is done to the human conscience in matters of truth, religion, and cultural creativity."⁴² Are not the thoughts of Pope John Paul II reflected by Monsignor Shocklee and by the policies and programs of HRO under his guidance? Do they reflect concepts of charity or of social change? Once again, John Shocklee was a committed seeker of justice and truth, whose compassion for humanity was dictated by his belief in Christianity. When there was injustice anywhere, John believed it had to be addressed by all people, and certainly by Catholics. As affirmed by Joe Wiley and Tom Nolan, John saw Jesus in everyone. John was only a priest – and that is all he ever wanted to be – a priest.

The Human Rights Office was closed on January 15, 2009, and its functions were transferred to Catholic Charities. Charity rather than Social Change is now the mission. Monsignor Shocklee's World view, and that of Cardinal Ritter and Archbishop May, has been replaced by the focus on local problems of the parish and neighborhood. The respect accorded the St. Louis ArchDiocese's Human Rights Office nationally and internationally is lost.

John's outreach and dedication to justice is just as apparent in his work as a parish pastor as it was as the director of the Human Rights Office. In fact, the two positions presented a seamless relationship based on his concepts of Christian truth and justice, on ecumenism, and his world-view. His contacts with priests and movements around the world gave even his parishes an international flavor. He was in contact with a number of Jesuits over-seas, with whom he exchanged favors. In a letter from Father Basel Silva, SJ, he was requested to help a Father Antony Paul Fernando of Sri Lanka when he came to St. Louis. John offered to let Father Fernando live with him at St. Englebert. Another priest from Sri Lanka, Father Prosper was coming to St. Louis to live with John, and John wrote and told him that he would pick him up at the airport and said: "I am anxious to meet you and happy to have you live with us in St. Louis". He had a doctor from Ethiopia, Mohamed Hussen, M.D. also living with him at St. Englebert. John Thekkedam, a former Jesuit priest from India, now married, lived

with him at St. Bridget. He said of John, "I think of him as a saint. He lived his life close to the people. I never saw him get angry, he was always calm." There were many more priests from other countries living with John from time to time and sometimes they acted as assistants. These foreign priests added an international flavor to his inner-city parishes.

It is amazing that Monsignor Shocklee was able to perform his duties as a parish priest and at the same time function as the leader of the Human Rights Office, and for all intents and purposes be the Archbishop's spokesman in matters pertaining to race and urban issues. There were concerns by Archbishop May and others that parishioners would voice concern about his multiple responsibilities. But John was just as diligent as a parish priest as he was as a community leader. He brought his experience in and love of education in support of his role as a pastor. "Personally, I'm greatly interested in catechetics – trying to bring the awareness of Divine life into the people of the community. The little kids are easy to reach, but I'm more stumped by trying to reach the teenagers and young adults – not to make converts of them – but to somehow make God present in their lives."

John was very much admired by the parishioners of each of the parishes he served, and in each he left a legacy. Perhaps the greatest legacy was that left at St. Bridget, the Bicentennial Civic Improvement Program and the many programs connected to Bicentennial.⁴³ It was as a Pastor of St. Bridget that John developed the reputation as an urban priest with innovative ideas and programs.

He also attended to the physical needs of the church and school buildings that were beginning to fall apart. An example is the letter he wrote to Msgr. O'Donnell, at that time Vicar General of the Archdiocese.

Dear Ed,

Last May 27, I wrote Archbishop May about the heating problem we had in St. Engelbert's School. The boilers are old, but most all we had faulty pipes throughout the school. In my letter to the Archbishop, I mentioned I had

reservations about spending \$30-40,000 or more in a total new system when I was not sure of diocesan plans for schools on the North Side.

By the time he was Pastor of St. Engelbert, John already had the reputation as a pastor for the poor and for the African American Community. He had also become a leader in the North Side Deanery and was able to use his position as the Director of the Human Rights Office to assist the North Side with its problems. The following memo to Cardinal Carberry is indicative of the use of his position in the Human Rights Office to assist his pastoral office.

Your Eminence,

The priests of the North Side have asked for some help in dealing with the problems they face in their parish ministry. They are interested in developing leadership among their black parishioners, a critical problem as long as the priests and sisters are predominantly white. There is need also of helping the people to set goals and objectives for parish projects. Most parishes have parish councils, but these have limited value. Frequently they are not represented, and most of the time they need direction in setting realistic goals and objectives.

I have talked to Saint Louis University who will be happy to work with us. I feel we owe this support to the priests. If we can assist them in putting more order in their work, it will reduce the frustration, which takes much out of them.

There are various techniques available, about which our priests should know, and do not know, especially as they apply to low-income urban communities, e.g. parish models of leadership development of realistic goals and objectives, evaluation designs, models of parish service and ministry. These techniques are consistent with the goals of the National Conference of Catholic Charities Parish Outreach Program, which is just getting underway.

As pastor of Ste. Genevieve du Bois, a wealthy suburban parish, he "was credited with increasing awareness of Ste. Genevieve du Bois of the needs of the greater St. Louis community. He encouraged social concerns activities and the founding of the parish St. Vincent de Paul Conference, which began in 1984.⁴⁴ The parish established a food pantry at St. Liborius. Of his time at Ste. Genevieve du Bois, he is quoted in a St. Louis Review interview: "Shocklee described his term in the suburbs as very happy years with wonderful, deeply spiritual people."⁴⁵ By the time Monsignor Shocklee left St. Genevieve du Bois, most of the parish were very fond of him. The parish named their athletic field after him.

When Monsignor Shocklee left St. Genevieve du Bois parish to become the pastor of the inner-city parish St. Liborius, it was viewed as his return to the work and the people he loved. It was certainly true that he looked forward to his return to the city, but his vision for the parish was not shared by many of the parishioners. The parishioners vision was one they shared with restorationists, while John's vision was one of outreach and helping people in need. "Beyond that, he looks to carrying out the Catholic Church's mandate to seek social justice. Shockley says it is rooted in the Bible and reiterated for centuries by the Catholic Church's popes, bishops and saints." Some of the parishioners said that Shockley was depleting parish funds for his own use. They mentioned \$25000 spent for an elevator that John needed to avoid the 22 step climb to the second floor.⁴⁶ John had a bad fall while at St. Genevieve and really never fully recovered. St. Liborius was John's last parish. He served there from 1987 to 1989, after which he retired and entered the Little Sisters of the Poor residence.

John Shocklee was a true son of the Church, and his faith never wavered. He was a scholar and had a firm grasp of the Church's social teaching. He embraced Catholic social teaching and spoke out when the Church strayed from its own teaching. Also, John was not awed by the hierarchy and never refrained

from taking positions that may have been contrary those of the hierarchy, as long as he was not in direct defiance of the archbishop.

John believed that Christ was in all people, and therefore he accepted all people – Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Agnostics, and even Atheists. Christ loved all people. He was truly ecumenical and worked with all denominations. He said that the Church was of the community, even if the community was not of the Church. In a short preface to a pictorial booklet distributed to the St. Engelbert parish, John wrote: "The parish boasts an excellent school, magnificent church, excellent choir, good catechetical program, opportunities in social, athletic, theatrical programs. Most of all it has a strong sense of community, which includes Catholic and Protestant, young and old. It is people who make a parish."

John entered the Little sisters of the Poor residence in 1989 and remained until his death on February 2, 2003. All who knew him remember him with love. A social summary prepared by the staff of the Little Sisters of the Poor states in part, "Monsignor is a sociable man, enjoying good conversation and helping others." On the day that he died, Father Jerry Kleba celebrated Mass in John's room for John, his family and friends.

FINIS

POSTSCRIPT

For the past five years, it has been my pleasure and privilege to look into the life of Monsignor John A. Shocklee. I think that he clearly saw the fallacies of our society and attempted to teach us, through example as well as through words, to see life in terms of the total of human endeavors. John Thekkedam, a former Jesuit, now married, said that the Pope wanted to start proceedings toward sainthood for Pope John Paul II, "but it is John Shocklee who should be made a saint". He was a seeker after truth and justice, and his guide was Christ and Catholic social teaching as promulgated in the Papal Encyclicals. John never wavered in his quest for truth and justice, and he stood against the institutions of power, even including the institutional Church. When he perceived the Church failing in its responsibility to promote Christian justice, in order to promote the interests of the institution, he spoke in opposition.

John Shocklee wanted to be a priest his whole life, and we can all be grateful that he achieved his dream. Many of his parishioners called him Father John, and he undoubtedly liked that. He loved being a priest. In an interview by a student archivist he said, "I've had a very good time as a priest, and it has been an interesting 51 years. St Bridget was the happiest time of my life." His brother Tim, the youngest of his siblings, said that once, as he was leaving John at the Sisters of the Poor Nursing Home, John said, "You know, I've been a priest for 60 years and loved every day of it."

Tom Nolan, in his Eulogy, said of John: "He was an unabashed follower of Jesus, a Roman Catholic priest whose ministry was sustained by prayer and the sacraments. His preaching skills never rivaled Dr. King's, and his self-sacrifice probably fell short of Mother Theresa's, but his holiness was always evident. John had an easy, almost chummy relationship with God. In his homilies and in his spoken prayers, John revealed a friendship with the Lord that had matured over the years. He had an abiding awareness of God's presence, and we who

knew John were drawn closer to God, because he allowed the Lord to be so real in his life."

Senator Thomas Eagleton, John's friend for over fifty years, spoke at his Memorial Mass and said, "Father Shocklee was priest with a great big heart. His efforts to people in need were inexhaustible."

Father Richard Creason spoke eloquently at Monsignor Shocklee's Memorial Mass, and his Eulogy follows.

The reason for our gathering this evening --- to bring to God's everlasting rest one who liked to be known as Father Shocklee, or John Shocklee, or just John.

Born of an Irish family from North St. Louis during hard economic times, John often quipped that the "family moved so often just to stay one step ahead of the landlord."

To most of St. Louis, however, he was known as Monsignor Shocklee--- the public person and a name associated with Pruitt-Igoe, St. Bridget's and the African American community.

It is a name that we link with the March from Selma to Montgomery, and to the 54 St. Louisans – the largest delegation of clergy and religious from outside the South at that time, to come and join the struggle. Among them were Sr. Antona Ebo and five other women religious, 6 rabbis, a group of African American clergy, Protestant clergy, Bishop Edward O'Donnell, Monsignor Francis Doyle and Dick Childress, dean of the Law School at St. Louis University.

It is a name revered as well in the organized labor movement for affirming the right of working people to be organized. From local issues under the aegis of Bob Kelly and the St. Louis Labor Council, especially in helping defeat the so-called

"Right-To-Work" to the national issues of Caesar Chavez and the United farm Workers, John Shocklee was there.

It is a name that is associated with interfaith and ecumenical coalitions as well as many civic coalitions working for social justice. Rabbi Robert Jacobs, Attorney Frankie Freeman, Father Bill Chapman, Norman Seay, Al Fleischman, Charles Vatterott, Father Paul Reinert and the Fordyce Conference; those with whom he stood shoulder to shoulder with at the Jefferson Bank, Congressman William Clay, Senator Gwen Giles and Marian Oldham; and his dear friends Dan and Adelaide Schlaflly, all lay claim to the Monsignor's friendship and partnership.

The amazing thing is that he just wanted to be John Shocklee, the priest.

The priest, John Shocklee, was born in 1917 at a time when a number of Catholic priests – most of whom came to be called "Monsignor"—were beginning to make significant contributions to the Church and to American society.

In 1920, within a few years after John Shocklee's birth, Monsignor John A. Ryan was named the first director of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. The National Catholic Welfare Conference was a predecessor of the present National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Monsignor Ryan became one of the first ever to define, and then advocate for a minimum wage for workers.

Throughout the 20th century other priests distinguished themselves in the prophetic call:

- Monsignor George Higgins, an advocate for the right of all working people to organize unions.

- Monsignor Geno Baroni, urban development and housing advocate for low and moderate-income families.
- Monsignor Jack Egan of Chicago, a key figure in developing the movement for faith based organizing in the United States.

Recognizing John Shocklee's aspirations as a priest of Jesus Christ, it is breaking open the Word of God that we can both be consoled in our loss, and encouraged about the works of faith and justice in which we are engaged.

The vision of Isaiah – the first reading—is that God's plan of old coming to a wonderful fulfillment. The web of oppression and death would be removed. A rich banquet would be provided for all people.

The operative words here are all people. John Shocklee saw things in that same fashion – a vision of black and white folk, of the poor and the wealthy, of the privileged and the disenfranchised all gathered at the same table. He was clearly uncomfortable with anything less. It is a table of inclusion and partnership, of dreaming of new possibilities while working on the practical details. He wanted to get the job done. If this prophetic vision is to come to ultimate completion in God's reign, and if St. Louis is to be the "City of God", there is much yet to be done to reach out to other ethnic communities, to Hispanics, Asians and Bosnians, in addition to African Americans. Our education systems have to be transformed, stable jobs have to be created and supported by a living wage, and the concept of diverse neighborhoods must be reclaimed. These must be at the heart of our efforts.

We can get this agenda by looking at the Apostle Paul as he wrote to the Corinthians. Paul spoke from dual perspectives – the consequences of not having love as well as celebrating the qualities of authentic love.

The consequences of not having love are rife. The biggest example that I can think of for St. Louis is concentrated poverty. There are the neighborhoods where residents lack the basics of life: a stable income, healthcare, decent housing and a good education. Perhaps no one could speak better to this effect than the families who once lived in Pruitt-Igoe.

John Shocklee, the parishioners of St. Bridget, and all that came to volunteer in the neighborhood in the 1960's tempered this situation with compassion, gentleness and care. While other cities experienced riots, what held the people of Pruitt-Igoe together if it was not a sense of care for one another? To many it remains a mystery that there was no riot, but the people of St. Bridget, the residents of Pruitt-Igoe know.

It is clearly inhumane when families or disabled persons or senior citizens live without a safe and decent home. It is an element that must burn as a passion for righteousness in the hearts of Americans so that no one is left out.

If we know fully the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, as well as John's love for their breadth and their depth, then we too will fully understand the potential for all people being seen as loving daughters and sons of a living God.

The principles can be summarized in three brief statements: affirmation of human life, defense of human rights, and the unity of the human family.

When we live by them, narrow self interest, arrogance and cynicism melt in favor of the real love about which Paul speaks. They reflect John's style of ministry, as he always approached people with respect and acceptance as human beings.

The Gospel --- the third reading of this liturgy—provides for us the clue that when we hunger and thirst for righteousness, that we will indeed find true satisfaction. Large or small examples fill our hearts and souls with a sense that things can get

better, especially for those simply needing an opportunity to show what they can do.

Well, folks, there is not only consolation but also pride in the new Cardinal Ritter College Prep that is under construction at the corner of Washington and Spring Avenues. John Shocklee's vision and support for the founding of Cardinal Ritter College Prep planted the seed for what is to happen in September of this year.

Well, rejoice again with Father Bill Hutchison and the folks at the Northside Community Center. They are constructing 20 new housing units on the 3900 block of Lincoln in the Ville. Several weeks ago they designated this development to be the "John Shocklee Homes".

John Shock lee, the priest, llved out his vocation to seek the righteousness of God and to offer service to many people and groups:

- To Catholics, to members of other faith traditions, and to those who have no religion at all.
- To high school students and drop outs.
- To civic leaders and to those who have run afoul of the law.
- To the powerful and the powerless.
- And most of all, to us his family and friends.

This priest united his sacrifice intimately with the sacrifice of Christ Jesus. John Shocklee embraced ever more deeply the mystery of Jesus' suffering, dying and rising. John – like all of us – became transformed. I firmly believe it is the only way that he could have accomplished such things of genuine and lasting value. He drew hearts to moments of conversion, he invited us to be more jus t to one another rather than stuff it down our throats, and he held out for the principle of serving rather than being served.

Rest in peace, Father John Shocklee, and lay claim to the fullness of the life that you have always sought.

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him their friend. They visited him while he was living in the Little Sisters of the Poor's home.

Bob Krekeler, a parishioner of St. Genevieve du Bois, explained how Msgr. Shocklee and he worked together to set up distribution system for neighborhood food pantries, which today has grown to be the St. Louis Area Food Bank. Bob also helped me understand how Msgr. Shocklee was able to win the approval of parishioners at St. Genevieve who first opposed his appointment as pastor. He had been a friend of John's long before John's appointment to St. Genevieve.

Bob Kelly, a union executive, provided insights concerning Father Shocklee's role with labor and his leadership in defeating Right-to-Work legislation in Missouri.

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About The Author

Harry Berndt was born July 9, 1926. He served in the United States Navy for three years during WWII. Berndt received a BA degree from Kent State University in 1951, after which he worked as an industrial engineer and factory manager for over twenty years for major multi-national corporations (Firestone, McDonnell-Douglas, Monsanto) in the United States, Mexico, and Portugal. In 1970 he left the corporate world and accepted a four-year scholarship to Washington University, St. Louis. He was awarded a Masters Degree in Sociology from Washington University in 1972 and a Ph.D. in 1975. Berndt taught sociology as an adjunct professor at Washington University, Maryville University, and for thirty years at the St. Louis Community College. During this period, Berndt was employed in community development as the Director of research and venture formation for Union Sarah Community Economic Development Corporation and as the Executive Director of Metro Housing Resources, a housing advocacy agency for low-income and minority people. He is the author of New Rulers in the Ghetto: Community Development and Urban Poverty, Greenwood Press 1977, and numerous essays and articles. Berndt is married to St. Louis artist Nancy Pfeil Berndt and they have four children, six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.